

BIBLE DRAMATICS

JAMES WATT RAINE



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BY

JAMES WATT RAINE

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To

CLARA REBECCA RAINÉ

OPEN-HEARTED, BROADMINDED, DEEP-SOULED,
GROWING EVER IN ETERNAL YOUTH

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CHAPTER ONE

THE VALUE OF DRAMATICS AND THE COST

The word Dramatics is quite generally used to cover considerably more than the drama. This is notably true with reference to Educational Dramatics, and Community Dramatics. Dramas or plays are often given, with their well-knitted plots, their presentation of individual characters, and their unified emotional impression. But more frequently, perhaps, pageants are presented. Episodes are strung together with some historical, or symbolical, or fanciful connection, familiar to the spectators and grouped into a rough unity in the common mind. The term is often stretched to include tableaux, living pictures explained by a reader, or symbolic groups labelled "The Flight of Time," "Liberty Triumphant," or "The Spirit of America." Sometimes these are developed into complicated and picturesque processions. In the crudest form the primary teacher starts Johnnie and his four followers up the

aisle with cards spelling B-I-B-L-E, and each boy glorifies his letter in a sing-song couplet. Then the teacher starts Susie and her seven followers up the other aisle. Their cards spell R-E-L-I-G-I-O-N, and as soon as they are arranged in a row, additional information is given in vociferated verse. Then four tiny tots in pink spell out L-O-V-E, and five little curly-heads in blue carry candles and spell L-I-G-H-T.

In one respect, from this crude beginning with little Johnnie, to the marvellous artistic character-creations of Edwin Booth, all these spectacles are alike. Each represents an effort to present ideas in a concrete form; and each uses persons, interesting human beings, to express in some way the ideas before our eyes.

When a fact or truth is presented thus as a spectacle it makes a deeper impression than can be made by narrating it. Being present when something occurs, seeing the faces and actions of these concerned, hearing their very words, and still more important, realizing without any effort the whole background and situation out of which the event grew,—this experience makes an impression upon the mind far more vivid than can be made by the most skillful narrator telling what happened. The observer feels that the occurrence has entered permanently into his experience. It has become a part of himself.

There are several reasons why such dramatic presentation makes a more permanent and more vivid

impression than merely telling the story. When an event is narrated, the listener must get it all through the ear. Worse still he must get it one word at a time, his mind must take in these single bricks, one after the other, and by a great effort of imagination, attempt to rebuild the scene brick by brick in his own mind. When it is presented dramatically, however, the ear does not have all the work to do; the eye works just as vigorously. The eye is not only much quicker than the ear, but it does not have to take in one brick at a time, it sees the event as a whole, and takes it in as a totality already built up so that most of the mental work is done. The mind of the observer, therefore, is not only saved considerable effort, but receives also an impression that is complete, and as it were, alive.

It is a commonplace of psychological observation that color is a great help in attracting and holding attention. This truth lies back of the beauty of the flowers, their wonderful colors being signals to the bees and butterflies. In spite of an apparent conspiracy to ignore it, color has a tremendous influence upon our attention and our pleasure. Nowhere can color be used with so much freedom as in Dramatics; solid masses, pure tones, enhanced by brilliant lighting, and all of it reëmphasized by movement.

Our psychologists tell us that motion attracts attention even more quickly than color. A rabbit, if he keep perfectly still, may escape our notice; but the moment he moves, our eyes follow him.

Dramatic presentation combines all these advantages. The spectator sees the thing happening before his own eyes. His mind takes it in as a whole; the color of scenery and costume increases the vividness; while the natural and significant movement makes it alive. The dramatic telling of stories, the enacting of artistic or even impromptu plays, significant dances and sometimes mere pantomime, have through the centuries held the crowd fascinated. Always and everywhere these have furnished enjoyment, if not hilarious delight. In the hands of wise educators they have also been made the vehicle for conveying important information, strong emotion and subtle incitement to action. A play offers a valuable opportunity for inoffensive, because impersonal, comment on life. The spectator sees his own ideas, habits and actions criticized in some one else. His thinking is enlarged, his sympathies broadened without spoiling his enjoyment.

A play has thus tremendous power to educate. It appeals to the eye, to the ear, to the imagination, above all to the emotions. It supplies beautiful pictures, pleasing form, brilliant color. To this it adds musical tones, the delight of harmonious motion, the charm of literature, the sense of supreme satisfaction in friendly, intimate fellowship with delightful personages, who reveal to us more of their inner selves than we can usually see in the less intimate contacts of everyday life.

If we want Bible stories and religious truths to

compete successfully with the screaming colors of the Sunday supplement, and the realistic appeal of the movies, we must adopt some method that *can* compete. It goes without saying that if Bible Plays are undertaken merely as a new form of publicity, a shrewd advertisement to catch the crowd, the enterprise will soon evaporate. It is important at the very beginning to decide whether your main purpose is to educate and develop the participants, or to entertain and instruct the audience. In Educational Dramatics the audience is incidental. The prime motive is not to provide a finished artistic entertainment for the audience. (It ought to be unthinkable that the main object is to get their money.) Yet the pupils need an audience, to share with them the climax of their efforts. For an older group the audience is even more important than it is for children. The teacher and her assistant, with the pastor and the janitor, will not suffice. Some thought therefore must be given to what the audience will appreciate. This may modify our procedure, but it should not vitiate our educational standards. The real purpose is to help the participants; to develop power in observing, in discernment, in forming correct judgments, in courtesy and good taste, in expressing natural emotion, even in making important decisions.

The player is put into situations parallel to his own experience or observation of life, so that by entering into these with vivid imagination his own personal living is enlarged. Nothing develops in-

telligent sympathy so strongly as entering vividly into the experiences of other people. The deeper these experiences, the more profoundly they affect the life and destiny of the one enacting them, the more instant and complete is the sympathy aroused.

There is an opportunity for freedom of self-expression in dramatics that no other form of training or recreation can offer. Under cover of some other personality the player can follow his impulse more freely, not to say more recklessly, than when conscious that he will be held responsible for whatever he does in his own person. This adolescent lad wants the experience of swaggering in insolent and invincible superiority. Yet he cannot afford to destroy his respectability. But if he can act the part of a tyrannical King or a heroic champion, this timidity of self-preservation gives way and he acquires new freedom and power. He must some time give vent to his feelings and impulses. It is better that the colt should kick up his heels and gallop around the pasture when he is, so to speak, on his vacation, than that he should run away with the buggy when he is in harness.

We must be careful, of course, that the dramatic presentation shall express the true meaning of the Bible passage. We have all, unfortunately, seen occasions when this was sacrificed by some poorly prepared interpreter. It takes more than good intentions to construct a Bible drama. It takes intimate knowledge of the Bible, acquaintance with the people

portrayed, familiarity with their customs and circumstances, and most of all perhaps, sympathetic insight into their personal problems, their purposes and their hopes. It should be needless to mention the most essential element: a profound experience of spiritual life; a poetic sense of values; a prophetic measurement of the meaning and proportionate significance of things when seen against the glowing background of eternity. But all of this would be inadequate without some comprehension of dramatic principles, and considerable practice in producing plays. If one is content to begin in a modest way and to study the chosen incident with sympathy for the persons involved (rather than to draw a lesson), wisdom in discovering the heart of it will soon be gained. When one has learned to find the real significance of incidents, experience in presenting them effectively naturally follows.

One of the remarkable characteristics of the Bible is the clearness and vividness with which it reveals the moral quality in the decisions men make and the deeds they do. We are made to see that character and destiny are involved in man's choosing. There is no inscrutable and overmastering Fate, no unethical accident. Most of the stories in the Bible deal with the common affairs of life, but they are illumined and interpreted by a spiritual glow that flashes upon us the consciousness of right and wrong, and sets them in the light and perspective of eternity. The alternative choices with their respective conse-

quences are suggested to us very vividly, usually with amazing skill.

The fundamental structure of the drama is cause-and-effect, this deed will produce this effect, that course of conduct will produce a different result. The moment of choosing between good and evil is skillfully pressed upon our attention until the resulting action rings down the curtain, and re-emphasizes the significance of choice.

When Bible stories, already so filled with human significance, are put into dramatic form, they make a powerful and fascinating appeal. Interest is always dependent upon knowledge already acquired. Most young people have a rather meager knowledge of the Bible, so that naturally they are not eagerly interested in studying it. But the life portrayed in the Bible was intensely interesting to those living it. If we had intimate knowledge of them, it would be interesting to us. The teacher must gain such intimate knowledge. It is of little use for a pastor or teacher to start a Bible class unless he really knows the Biblical people, their circumstances, habits, and social organization, or unless he is willing to spend some money and much time getting such knowledge. Knowing the Bible in a certain old-fashioned way, being able, that is, to quote from it copiously, is by no means sufficient. That alone is rather a deadener of interest. He must be able by diligent imagination to enter into the life of Abra-

ham, Jeremiah or Paul as an intelligent and eager contemporary.

It is equally important to know the life and thought of the young people of today, to understand and sympathize with their point of view. Perhaps the place of greatest weakness is the failure to *connect* the Bible with modern life. The caravan of Abraham, the statesmanship of Moses, or the blazing indignation of Amos,—what have these to do with the thoughts and plans of our life today? If any real vital connection can be shown, the young people, no matter how busy, will listen eagerly and loyally. But they will not have much respect for camouflage, nor for a sincere but musty conventionalism. They will not refuse respect and admiration to the great-souled men and women of the past, if they are helped to see them as something more than a far-off blur. How often do people imagine that the heroic men and women in the Bible were in very different situations from us. Instead of the thousand distracting things that confuse our judgment, and make moral decisions questionable, they were always sure what was right. "God told them what to do; we have to guess." We can get little good from the Bible until we perceive that the men and women there portrayed were just like us; not passive puppets moved hither and thither by a mysterious Divine will. How can we dispel the common error that God spoke very plainly and with compelling emphasis in those

olden days, amidst none of the distractions that blur and deaden our spiritual perceptions today? How can we induce young folk to think their way into the great situations of the past, to sense the singleness of aim, the unselfishness of purpose, the struggle for cleanness of heart, the half-blinded groping after God, the grim determination with which, in spite of temptations just like ours, these heroes held on step by step, often thinking that all their effort would be wasted and that they would die as the fool dieth, for a mere Puritanic notion? I know of nothing that will help them more than dramatizing those heroic lives,—living themselves into those situations, feeling the uncertainty, the fear, the struggle necessary to hold to one's ideals; and sensing the same self-sacrifice, the same public spirit, the same unassured faith that this or that must be done because it ought to be done; the same faith impelling these old heroes that they feel stirring uncomfortably in their own hearts today.

Let an alert and understanding leader spend a few months on the Bible. Let him focus his attention until he can see each incident in its original historical setting. Let him force himself to see things *while they are happening*, always imagining himself as one of the original onlookers. This will make severe demands upon him. What sort of place was Bethlehem? hilly? rolling country? or flat? What could one see in the distance? Would Jerusalem be visible? the river Jordan? What sort of houses would

one see? What would men be doing, farming or fishing? What sort of implements are they using? What sort of clothes are they wearing? Describe each garment in detail so that you can make one like it. What sort of food do they eat? How do they cook it? These and a hundred other questions must be answered about social, religious, economic and governmental affairs, before the leader is ready to organize a class to study the actual life of the Hebrew people. After a leader thus prepares himself, he will not find it difficult to hold the attention of young people.

If a pastor or Sunday-school teacher will not take the time and trouble to learn the actual inner and outer life of these people, why should he expect to awaken any interest in the subject in the healthy minds of honest boys and girls? Too many church leaders, because they are too lazy to make thorough preparation, blame the young people for lack of interest in religion.

The Bible has been so long looked upon as a collection of moral precepts, or as a sort of puzzle in which certain predictions in the Old Testament were to be matched by certain fulfillments in the New Testament, that multitudes of good unthinking people have never noticed that the Bible is largely a book of biography. They do not stop to realize that the actors in the incidents recorded were men and women like ourselves, with hopes and fears, tempers and humors, selfish habits and generous impulses; responding to the same motives that move men to-

day, the love of money, the love of pleasure, and the sense of loyalty.

In any assigned incident, if the leader will play fair, he must seek diligently to discover what sort of men and women took part. What were the actual circumstances? What deeds did these people do? What were their traditions, their prejudices, their likes and dislikes in general? With this setting vividly in mind, we may estimate what the motives were that actuated each of the individuals in the incident under discussion.

The most important task in studying a play is to reconstruct consistently the *motives* of the various persons. Would a man with this nature, this temperament, this character, do such a deed as that? What could have been going on in his mind to make him do it? The slang phrase, "How did he get that way?" is our exact inquiry.

The fundamental principles already suggested underlie all dramatic instruction, whether in the Junior, Intermediate or Senior departments of the Sunday-school, but the methods of procedure will vary greatly in detail. It would be a fatal blunder to treat Josephus Henry, who has actually begun to shave, in the same way as his little brother Tommy Dimples.

Most churches that have introduced Bible dramatizing have doubtless introduced it more or less accidentally, at whatever point an enthusiastic and tireless teacher has been found willing to undertake it.

Hence in one church, the method is used in the Intermediate department, in another it belongs to the Juniors, in rare instances the plays are given by the Senior department. The reasons for this rarity are only too obvious. Confident and successful teachers of maturer young folk are rather scarce. With boys and girls in the later teens no teacher can be "the whole show," whereas a skillful teacher is certain of success with children. But the dramatic method is especially valuable for grown-ups. As soon as we can get enough teachers trained in Bible dramatics, this method should be introduced in all departments. But when that time comes, many churches will make a disappointing discovery,—that the older boys and girls are not interested. Indeed many discouraged church workers have already discovered it. The explanation is not far to seek, *if Bible plays in their church are always "kid shows."*

It is well known among experienced organizers that the younger drives out the older. For instance, when a Young Men's Christian Association is organized in a town, if the organization begins by featuring the work for boys, young men will be reluctant to join. It is better to push the work for men first, and later when that is firmly established add a boys' department, and even then most workers think it must be kept in a separate part of the building.

In a boys' Sunday-school class, if a lad two or three years younger joins, beware! Better transfer him at once, for if one or two youngsters join, the

older boys will probably drop off. "No, sir, I'm no kid. If this is going to be a kindergarten class, I'll quit." We ought to have foresight enough to plan ahead and meet this situation.

An adequate solution involves at least two lines of distinctive policy. The Bible plays given by the young people must be very obviously different from those presented by the children and Juniors.

1. They can be given at *different times*: for instance the children's plays may be given in connection with the Sunday-school, the grown-ups' in connection with the Young People's Sunday night meeting, or at the Midweek Church meeting. Perhaps your church will have the wisdom to invite the young men and women to present a Bible play every month at the Sunday night church service. It would probably be fatal to offer a similar occasion to the Juniors also. Dig a deep gulf between Juniors and Seniors, and let no ambition of the Juniors or their teachers attempt to bridge it.

2. The style of presentation should be kept scrupulously different, in setting, in plot and in characterization.

Obviously a chubby youngster, not yet promoted to long trousers, will not give a very realistic portrayal of Moses, the great leader of Israel. Even with keen youths of sixteen or eighteen it will not be a serious character study. For such pupils different incidents must be chosen; incidents that emphasize the plot, the on-going of events, step by step.

The younger the children, the more the story element must be heightened and simplified. The setting also must be very simple. The charm of their playing is artlessness; therefore intricate scenery, elaborate costumes, wigs and makeup to imitate adults, —all this is incongruous and is far better omitted.

3. There should be careful discrimination in the choice of the Bible incidents to be dramatized. The players should not attempt to present situations that are entirely beyond their experience. Children of course can give the child Moses, the little Samuel, the Manger, some of the parables, and scenes that are at the same time symbolic and simple. They will delight in the saving of Noah from the Flood. Some will represent *rain* dancing in slate colored ribbons of crêpe paper, some *lightning* darting about in yellow and red streamers, others *waves* in bathing suits of blue and tiny neck ruffles or streamers of foamy white. Others will be blissful animals, and a few will retain sufficient dignity for Noah and his family. Children also make delightful angels, where they are wanted for decorative effect, rather than to bring a serious message from God.

For adolescent lads it is well to choose incidents of youthful life and adventure such as David defeating Goliath, Jonathan pledging David, or Joshua outwitting the wily Gibeonites.

But wherever discrimination or judgment is an essential element of the incident, or anything beyond elementary character-portrayal is needed, it would

probably be wise to reserve the incident, to be dramatized by the older players.

In several published children's plays one sees Joseph represented as a prettily dressed child. But he was at least seventeen years old, probably twenty-five, when thrown into the pit by his brothers. The story of Joseph has a deeper significance than is suggested in the usual plays for children.

On the other hand leaders of dramatics for young people have scarcely begun to possess their rich heritage, even in the Old Testament. Too many church members are lazily living on their baby-knowledge of the Bible, and so the changes are rung again and again upon the simple incidents they learned in childhood. But there are wide stretches to explore: the national and international policies of the Kings; entangling alliances with Egypt and Assyria; bloody ambitions as startling as Macbeth's; blood feuds and the romance of personal friendship; the glorious careers of the prophets dedicated to social saviorhood, or the sainthood of suffering, or the spiritual rapture of the sublimest poetry. Bible dramatics in its magnificent sweep takes in all the heights of idealism, and all the depths of human woe. It points to the dazzling purity of the beauty of holiness and shrinks from the shuddering darkness of besotted sin. It shows the power of love, the folly of hate, the strength of brotherhood, the heroism of faith, the gentleness of forgiveness, the joy of giving, the patience of hope, the serene peace of

the life everlasting. This is no child's play. It is a glorious adventure, a daring exploration into the brightest beckonings, the richest values, the irreducible realities of life.

There are already good books for Juniors, like Miller's "The Dramatization of Bible Stories" (University of Chicago Press, 1918) and those by Rita Benton (Abingdon Press), and for Intermediates, such as Galloway's "The Dramatic Instinct in Religious Education" (The Pilgrim Press, 1922). The purpose of this book is not to duplicate these excellent books, but to assist earnest young men and women to present Bible dramatizations, that shall be worthy of their best intellectual and artistic effort.

The process of dramatizing a story, and producing a play, is not simple nor easy. No creative, artistic work ever is. But it is not at all insurmountable.

There is a great difference between a group of young people that have been trained for several preceding years to dramatize stories and a group that have not had such experience—most grown-ups have not had it. For such it is probably necessary to do a little of the elementary work that should have been done when they were younger. Therefore the various procedures are explained step by step, as simply as possible, in non-technical language. Remember there are many earnest and intelligent persons interested in this matter, who have not had your

advantages. The aim of this book is to help such. But the end to be reached is high. The presentation must be psychologically true to life, spiritually profound, and artistically satisfying to the sternest demands of beauty.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROCESS OF DRAMATIZING

If a class is to dramatize its own play from the Bible account of Moses, Joseph, or Jeremiah, how shall we go about it? Shall all sit around a table and discuss it together? Or shall each member write the scene at home and bring it to the group for criticism? Or shall we begin by sending half a dozen members to the platform to commence acting it out?

For a class of children, the teacher gathers the information and tells the story as vividly as possible. Thus they get their material. Then the class can go to the platform (or still better the lawn) and "play Moses." With apparently slight hints from a skillful teacher the youngsters will gradually construct the scene. But they will get almost as much enjoyment from selecting their Moses or Miriam by eenie-meenie-mynie-mo, as from the presentation of the action. In this they differ from older people, who are more eager, perhaps too eager, to produce the play. But there is a great deal to be done before the play can be presented, indeed before there is any play.

Groups sometimes fail to realize the importance of this preparatory work. Before a scene can be con-

structed, they must gather the facts, the customs, the personal traits, and the group psychology involved in the situation to be dramatized. This requires considerable search, far more than most people suspect. Unless definite information on all such matters is secured, the resulting picture is a fuzzy blur.

An adult group cannot get the material for their play from the teacher's narrative, already gathered, selected and arranged. They must themselves go to the sources and search out details before they can satisfactorily reconstruct the situation. The mature and alert mind insists on asking, "What actually happened?"

When such a group meets, the first step is for every one to get the Bible material fully and vividly in mind. This may seem too much like ordinary Bible study to be very interesting or exciting. It is therefore well to begin with a very short story, already somewhat familiar, so that they need not be long delayed in gathering material before getting a taste of dramatic work.

Suppose we take the parable of the Lost Coin in Luke 15:8-10. How did the woman lose the coin? Where did she keep the ten pieces? Why did she sweep? Do you sweep the room if you drop half a dollar? Why sweep the whole house? Does not that seem an exaggeration? Was it at night when she lost it? Does it seem natural to call in her friends and neighbors? Would you call together your friends

and neighbors on finding a lost coin? The story does not seem quite consistent.

Shall we assume that Luke exaggerated? Or that Jesus heightened the story? Or do we need to become more familiar with their situation and their customs? Do we know what kind of houses they had when Jesus lived? Travellers tell us what sort of houses they have in Palestine now, and their description agrees with the terms used in the Gospels. The class should consult some books of travel.*

The woman doubtless lived in a one-room house, so that sweeping the room was sweeping the house. The house had no window, so the corners farthest from the open door would be too dark to see without a lamp. On one side of the room the floor would be raised eighteen inches above the rest; the lower level would be a dirt floor; the higher portion might be of stone slabs, but more likely it also would be of dirt. It would be trodden into dust on top; hence to find a coin a careful sweeping would be very necessary. There was nothing we would call furniture in the house. The bed was a thin mattress rolled up and put aside during the day. There was neither table nor chairs, perhaps a shelf with stone jars for honey, olive oil or figs, a sort of bin for meal, possibly a

* Barton: Hallock: *The Old World in the New Century*, Grant: *Journeyings in the Land Where Jesus Lived*, George Adam Smith: *The Peasantry of Palestine*, Finckmore: *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, *The Holy Land—Peeps into Many Lands* series.

small chest or trunk, but neither bureau, nor drawers. Women usually bored holes in coins, strung them on a chain or string and wore them around the neck, or more often around the forehead. Probably the chain or string broke, the circlet of coins fell, and when she gathered them up one coin was missing. Besides its value as money, she must find it, or she could not wear her "jewelry," and that was important enough to warrant even a housecleaning. As she went to a neighbor's to borrow a broom, they would gossip about her loss, and when she returned the borrowed broom there would be noisy exclamations of congratulation and advice.

When they are familiar with the setting of the story, they are ready to discuss how to dramatize it. It is well enough at this point to let them act the scene, each player supplying the words and action for himself. One dressed as the husband or as a half-grown son may hungrily inquire why supper is not ready. The woman replies with a few excited words explaining the accident and asks him to help look for the missing coin. They search awhile, then one suggests a lamp and it is lit. It may be necessary to go to a neighbor's for a light. A few moments' further search, then one suggests a broom for a complete and thorough search. The family does not possess a broom, so somebody goes out to borrow one. During the sweeping the boy finds the coin and the mother is hilarious. The lender of the broom and some of the other neighbors have gathered about the door,

and they exclaim also. There is a general air of gossipy gladness. Two or three sets of people can act this out, the Director asking one and another to take the part of the woman, the husband or the neighbors, without waiting for the end of the scene. He should put a member into the cast and withdraw another very informally. "Johnson, you are tall, will you do the husband? I think you will look delightfully awkward down on all fours hunting that coin." The Director must be an absolute despot, but he must be courteous and humorous.

After the scene has been played through once or twice, the new players will be alert to seize the best that has been said and done by others, and improve upon it. After it has been played several times in this rough fashion, and the edge has been taken off their impatience, they must discuss the whole production more thoroughly. In dramatizing it, they must consider the plot, the setting, and the characterization. For beginners the last may well be discussed first, but the story will constantly creep in.

A drama not only shows us vividly an event while it is happening, it must also show us the causes out of which the event grew, and the results it produced. It is thus a complete whole, with beginning, climax, and conclusion, and like every work of art, it selects from the great mass of interwoven things just those situations, persons, phrasings, that hold our attention to its causes, development and consequences. It sponges and blurs into a fainter background all the

other network of related life, with which the event is entangled by a thousand tendrils.

It is necessary to simplify by the omission of everything that is not actually needed. We must select the essential things to be brought into the foreground, and push everything else into the background.

But how shall we decide what are these essentials? If we bring too many things into the foreground, there will be a confused blur in the observer's mind; if we push too many into the background, it will be difficult for him to sense the conditions and causes out of which the event grew.

The uncomfortably persistent question that insists on being answered is: With how few of these items, gathered by the class, can we show the event complete with its causes, its development and its consequences? We must not introduce any unnecessary or extraneous item. On the other hand, since every work of art should be self-explanatory, we must not omit anything needed for the portrayal.

A play must give the spectator a sense of movement, a consciousness of cause and effect. Each action should be recognized as the result of something previously done. It should also be the cause of something to follow. This sense of progress is all that the average spectator needs by way of plot.

One caution is perhaps necessary. As the group works out the plot, each personage must keep in character. The cause must not be mechanical, but psy-

chological. You want a personage who has just left the stage to return suddenly and unexpectedly, and thus discover something. But there must be a reason inside of this person's mind for his return, or it will seem mechanical. He comes back for something he has forgotten—his hat, his sword, or his letter. The action proceeds from something that arises naturally in the mind of the personage. Would such a man do this? What would influence him to do it? Does it naturally fit on to what he has been doing?

In working out the plot, it is not necessary at first to separate the action into scenes. Let the group act out the story, changing to a new scene whenever it seems natural. The main thing is to get into the characters, and while keeping in character to work out the situation suggested by the plot.

Let us take the parable that follows, the lost Son, in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Everybody reads the account carefully. It is a story, an account of something that has happened in the past, a narrative that has been remembered and recalled in order.

The first task is to transpose it from the past to the present, or perhaps more accurately to transport ourselves from the present to the past, so that we may see it and overhear what was said when the event was actually happening.

So far as the parable records, nothing is done before the younger son asks for his share of his father's estate. But a great deal must have hap-

pened leading up to that request. We must show the motive for the startling demand. First of all we must portray the circumstances, the surroundings in which the incident occurs. Is it city, village or farm? They had a fatted calf, and the elder brother was in the field presumably working. Evidently it is not a city scene. Did they live in poverty or in plenty? The father had many hired servants. Rings, shoes and festival robes indicated in those days considerable wealth.

Why did the son leave? Was his father unreasonable, harsh or tyrannical? The father's character in the first scene must be as gentle and lovable as it is in the last, since there is no hint of a change in him. The elder brother may have been overbearing, or at least unsympathetic. The break was doubtless due to the younger son's impulsive restiveness and imperious selfish demands. He was perhaps somewhat "spoiled," and like most very young men resented the dull routine of home life. There is a certain age when only things at a distance have a rosy glow.

With all this in mind the first scene may be sketched somewhat as follows:

THE LOST SON

SCENE I

[The corner of a house occupies the right half of the background; a door faces the audience; on the

left of the door, a stone seat; a path leads across to the left. A vine is trained above the seat and the door. The FATHER, an old, white-bearded man, is seated, talking to a SERVANT, who stands.]

FATHER. I see. We'd better buy some new jars then. Get Benjamin to make them at once if he will, and perhaps he can get them finished by the time you have the olives picked and the oil trodden out.

ABDON. I will see him this very hour. If he cannot make the jars at once, we might postpone the olive picking for a few days.

FATHER. I never like my olives to grow too ripe.

[As the SERVANT leaves—right rear—the younger son, GEBER, enters—left front; his face discontented; throws himself down,—center—and throws his turban on the bench.]

FATHER. Well, son, what is it? What's wrong?

GEBER. Everything wrong! Can't have any fun. . . .

FATHER. Why, what about the boat I just bought you?

GEBER. I'm tired of sailing.

FATHER. I thought sailing was your one great delight, that your happiness depended on a good boat with large sails.

GEBER. Well, it's too much work to look after it.

[Enter, from the right front, the elder son,

NATHAN. He stands sternly eyeing his brother.

NATHAN is a keen man with a firm mouth and

observing eye. He carries his head as if it had some connection with his backbone.]

FATHER [to GEBER]. Well, has your Arabian pony gone lame? I thought that was going to be a constant delight.

GEBER. I want to go out and see something of the world!

NATHAN. There is a bit of the world just below the olive orchard I wish you would go and see. The wall is badly broken down. You might take six or seven servants and build it up.

GEBER. Oh, it's always work, work, work!

NATHAN. Well, somebody has to work; and you don't do much of it.

FATHER. Well, never mind, son. He will settle down after awhile. He's young yet.

NATHAN. Yes, father, but you have been saying that for the last three years. He needs to lay aside his silk robe and get into a work tunic.

GEBER. You and your work tunics go to perdition.

FATHER. Softly, son, softly. What would you? Must we not keep up the home of our fathers? Is it not true, as your brother says, that some one must work? What would become of our domain, if we did not attend to it?

GEBER. I don't care what becomes of it. We don't need to work, if you would just cast off these peasants and servants that live on the place and let you support them.

FATHER. They work pretty well, son. We can't cast

them off. We must let them labor and give them food. That is our responsibility.

GEBER. Well, I'm tired of it. Give me my share of the property and I'll go off somewhere, and brother won't have to worry any more about my working.

NATHAN. Impudent young cub! He doesn't know how to take care of money. He will spend it all in six months and come back for more.

[*During NATHAN's speech, GEBER glares at NATHAN with hatred, then turns and goes to the left, picks up his turban, puts it on; turns his face back to his FATHER's at "merchant."*]

FATHER. Yes, but since he feels that way, I think perhaps it's wise to let him try. He might learn to make a living as a merchant. I suppose you will not go so far, son, that you can't come back and see us often?

GEBER. Oh, I'll come back, of course.

FATHER. Well, perhaps such a venture will be good for you. But a merchant's life is not easy. You know the old saying, "A merchant has to live with his camels." It is a hard life and dangerous. But you are young and strong and brave. And experience will give you more patience and wisdom. Remember the honor of your fathers, and play the man.

GEBER. Oh, I'll play the man, all right. All I want is a chance.

CURTAIN

The next scene is in the far country. It would scarcely be wise to show the enticing allurements, the sensual fascinations of his riotous living. The parable is more concerned with the results of it. No matter how enjoyable it might have been, it is gone, leaving him none the better, none the wiser, not even "better off." He has gained neither money, skill nor lasting happiness. But he has not yet reached the bottom. The bitterest experience is to come. Yet this scene must show him in a sufficiently embarrassing and unpleasant situation to present a striking contrast to the fool's paradise which he had chosen.

SCENE II

[The younger brother richly dressed in striking colors. He stands dejectedly with a bill in his hand. A banker dressed in dark but rich garments stands before him with a small ledger.]

GEBER. *[As he reads, his face shows petulance.]* Oh, it can't be all gone! There were six hundred gold shekels!

BANKER *[looking in his book]*. You deposited six hundred and thirty-one gold shekels in our bank.

GEBER. Well, where has it all gone? I can't have spent it all!

BANKER. I have amounts and receipts for every shekel. Here is a bill from Ephraim of Damascus

for silk raiment and fine linen. [*Reads.*] Three blue tunics trimmed with gold; two girdles of embroidery; shoes of soft leather stitched with silk fringes; a cloak of crimson wool with silver clasps—six score silver shekels. Here is another bill from Jonadab of Alexandria: five jars of Greek wine; cakes of fine flour; fish and partridges—sixty shekels. Another from Ben-Hadad the Syrian: a lady's veil of Samarcand and a robe of blue silk—ninety shekels. A bracelet of gold and two anklets of filigree silver, Damascus work,—one hundred shekels, to be sent to the daughter of Rasul. Another from Hazor: spices and amber; odors from Arabia; Ethiopian gums—sixty shekels. All of these bills came to us in one week and we have paid some such bills almost every week. Would it please my lord to see the accounts? We have made no mistakes.

GEBER. No, I hate accounts! No use going over all that. If it's gone, it's gone. Can't you lend me a hundred shekels for a little while?

BANKER. For a little while? For how long? How could you ever repay us? Where is the money coming from? What bond or surety can you give to the bank?

GEBER. I hate the bank and your stinginess! You might take a chance.

BANKER [*smiling sourly*]. It would be no chance. It would be certain loss. Our money would be gone forever.

GEBER. Well, get you gone! [*Throws himself impatiently on a settee.*] I'll have to trust to luck. If my luck would only turn! I wonder if I could borrow from Gehazi—but I could never pay him back— Well, he's helped me to spend plenty. I'll see if I can't pry some out of him.

CURTAIN

The next scene is short, very short. Geber is alone at his swine-herding. It is scarcely practicable or desirable to have these animals on the stage, and the herdsman must not stay away from them very long.

Besides, people do not usually talk to themselves, except in a fragmentary way. For this reason also, the scene must be short,—unless we introduce some confidant. But what confidant would he find in a strange land to whom he would reveal the deepest and most shamefaced feelings of his heart? To introduce such a person fittingly would necessitate considerable dramatic maneuvering. This would probably blur the clear-cut impression we desire to make upon the minds of the audience.

SCENE III

[GEBER, *in rags, sits alone under a tree, utterly weary and dejected. He must not wear a robe, or any flowing garment that would conceal the discouraged droop of his relaxed body. Every line*

must show the sagging muscles, the slump of hopeless disgust. Let his costume be simple and scant; a torn tunic reaching nearly to the knees, an old sleeveless leather coat, perhaps with one shoulder torn away, an old leather belt, and sandals.]

GEBER. I wish that heathen would send me something to eat! They'll forget me just as they did yesterday. I'm so starved I feel dizzy! [*Knocking a carob pod off the tree, he picks it up and chews on it.*] I can't even get enough of this swine feed. They've stripped the tree almost clean . . . [*throws himself down under the tree in disgust; wipes a tear off with the back of his hand*] . . . What a fool I am! . . . [*starting up and leaning on his hand*]. If I only had stayed at home! . . . The house servants at home and even the field servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! . . . [*arises and walks back and forth*]. If I could only find a master like my father instead of this skinflint I'm working for! . . . If I went back home and asked for work, Nathan would mock me and the servants would laugh . . . but . . . [*sits on a rock*] they mock me here. [*Chin on hand; elbow on knee.*] I could not be any worse off. [*A long pause and a decision as his face reveals that he has decided.*] [*He arises, saying*] I will arise and go to my father and say unto him, "Father, I have sinned

against heaven and thee. I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Take me as one of thy hired servants! Take me!"

QUICK CURTAIN

SCENE IV

[Same as Scene I. *The FATHER and NATHAN are outside the house. The FATHER is sitting on a stone seat against the house, left of the door. NATHAN is before the door. NATHAN hands his FATHER a silver goblet of sherbet; the FATHER drinks and sets the goblet back on the tray. NATHAN puts the tray on a taboret to the right of the door.*]

FATHER. I'll be better, son. It's not fever. I didn't sleep much last night.

NATHAN. Worrying about Geber, I'll wager! Young cub! Well, if you are feeling better, father, I'll go and see about getting that barley in. [*Calls into house.*] Zorah, come here and stay with my father. [*He goes out right.*]

[*The FATHER repeats some passages of Scripture. He that keepeth thee shall not slumber. The Lord shall keep thee from all evil. He shall keep thy soul. How long, oh Lord, how long? He rests his chin upon his hands, which are clasped on top of his staff. There is an absent look in his eyes. He comes*

back to the present, shakes his head; happens to see some one afar off, left front, looks sharply.]

FATHER. Why! can that be Geber? [*Shakes his head.*] I'm growing foolish, but O God of Jacob, send me back my boy! [*He wipes a tear with the back of his fingers, looks again, is startled.*] Why, it is Geber! my son, my son! [*Rises, seems dizzy, steadies himself and goes hastily but feebly across the stage. GEBER enters—left front.*]

GEBER. Oh, father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and [*the rest is probably lost in the confusion*]*—I am no longer worthy to be called thy son.*

[The FATHER drops his staff and flings his arms about GEBER's neck and drops his face on GEBER's neck, then takes GEBER's face in both his hands, kisses his forehead, then his cheek; leans on GEBER's shoulder and turns to walk back to the seat. He puts his left arm around GEBER's neck, turns, and supported by GEBER, who slips his right hand around his FATHER's waist, walks back toward the center of the stage. Enter two servants, from the right, one carrying a wooden pitchfork. Both look startled; then recovering from their astonishment they bow low. The FATHER and GEBER walk on to the seat. The FATHER turns, still standing, and gives his commands.]

FATHER. Zorah, prepare a bath, and anointing oil.

Bring forth quickly the best robe and put it on Geber, a ring for his hand and shoes for his feet. Abdon, get a fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, for this, my son, was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. Call in whatever men you need, and make haste.

[ZORAH and ABDON bow low. ZORAH goes into the house and ABDON goes back to the field. The FATHER sinks to his seat. GEBER kneels beside him with his face on the FATHER's knee.]

FATHER. My lost son is found . . . found again.

SLOW CURTAIN

These scenes give us very little more than the bare narrative. If nothing inconsistent is introduced they can be filled out and greatly expanded. But in their present form they are to illustrate the first important process in dramatizing a story, namely, translating the narrative into dramatic form. This does not modify the general plan. It makes no change in the structure: if there are four scenes in the narrative, it leaves four scenes in the dramatic sketch. It is as nearly as possible a literal translation.

The next step is to reduce the number of changes from place to place; to conserve the impression of unity in the story which changes of scene in acting tend to impair and destroy.

For a concrete example suppose we choose the in-

cidents connected with Naboth's vineyard, recorded in the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Kings. The group has read it, talked it over, and come to some agreement as to the characters of the persons involved. They have worked out roughly the successive steps of the plot. How many scenes are necessary to present it? At least six or seven will be suggested.

1. Ahab asking and Naboth refusing the vineyard.

2. Jezebel in the palace imperious and unscrupulous, Ahab baffled and ill-humored.

3. Jezebel's plot to destroy Naboth.

4. The feast at which Naboth is entrapped.

5. The trial of Naboth, showing the prominent men so corrupted by aristocracy and luxury that at the Queen's request they murder Naboth by perjury.

6. Jezebel tells Ahab that Naboth and his sons are dead and the vineyard falls to the King.

7. Ahab goes to the vineyard and is confronted by Elijah.

As soon as they begin to play these scenes, some one will sense the possibility of condensing them into fewer.

"Why can't we omit the first scene and let Ahab tell the substance of it to Jezebel in response to her questions?" "And why not omit the sixth scene if we know that Jezebel has planned the death of Naboth? Can we not assume that the deed is done,

especially when Ahab comes to the vineyard in the last scene? He wouldn't come if Naboth was not out of the way."

Some of the pupils will go still further and suggest that we combine the third and fourth. Still others will want to combine the fourth and fifth.

"But how will they know what Jezebel has planned?" "Well, Jezebel must read aloud part of her letter after she writes it."—"Or while she is writing it," is offered as an amendment.

After they have discussed these suggestions and played the scenes this way and that, they will have gained a pretty good knowledge of the situation, and will give a satisfying presentation, no matter how many scenes they finally decide upon.

When beginning to work upon a new story, do not be in too great haste to condense. Rather encourage the group to think out details for the sake of increased vividness and local color. This helps them to get more fully into the spirit of it. After they have dwelt upon it sufficiently, condensation may perhaps improve it.

The result of the common effort at the close of the rehearsing is somewhat as follows:

SCENE I

[A room in the KING's palace at Jezreel. QUEEN JEZEBEL in gorgeous attire is reclining on a divan (a wicker couch, covered with a curtain or

an old portière.) Plenty of cushions. Attendants with long-handled peacock-feather fans or some other suggestion of Oriental luxury. Enter OBADIAH, the KING's chamberlain. He bows low to the QUEEN.]

JEZEBEL. Has the king returned, Obadiah?

OBADIAH. Not yet, O Queen [*another bow*], but I think I hear him now.

[*KING AHAB in rich garments enters with an attendant soldier. Wearily he throws himself on a divan, lost in thought.*]

OBADIAH [*advancing with a low bow*]. The board is spread, O King. Will my lord please to partake thereof?

AHAB. Nay, I want nothing. I cannot eat just now.

JEZEBEL. Oh, my lord, why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no bread?

AHAB. Because I spoke unto Naboth, who dwelleth close by the palace, and said, "Naboth, give me thy vineyard for a garden because it is near unto my palace, and I will give thee a better vineyard, or I will give thee the worth of it in money." But Naboth said, "I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers."

JEZEBEL [*she has arisen, listening intently to the KING's narrative, then stands scornful*]. Art thou a King? Dost thou govern this kingdom of Israel? [*While speaking she has unclasped the royal seal from his neck. Then she goes to a taboret and*

writes, beckoning the soldier to her and talking as she writes.] Take this to the nobles and elders of Jezreel. Tell them to proclaim a feast and set Naboth at the chief table. Then get witnesses to swear falsely and accuse him of treason, then take him out and stone him to death. See, I have sealed it with the King's seal. [*She does so.*] See that it is done.

[As soldier goes out, JEZEBEL goes to AHAB in a kinder mood.]

JEZEBEL. Come, my lord, arise, let us eat, and drink, and let thy heart be merry.

[She takes his hand, nods to OBADIAH, who bows low and precedes them out to the banquet room.]

JEZEBEL [*playfully*]. My lord, I will give you the vineyard of Naboth to possess it. [*AHAB starts, her smiling overcomes his conscience, and he goes out with her.*]

SCENE II

[In NABOTH'S Vineyard. After the cowardly, fawning courtiers had gone through the mockery of a trial and sent NABOTH to death. AHAB enters followed closely by OBADIAH.]

AHAB. Call the messenger, Obadiah.

OBADIAH. He comes, O King.

AHAB [*to his attendant, entering*]. Didst thou see Naboth stoned to death?

ATTENDANT. Nay, O King, but I have just come from his burying.

AHAB. Ah, it is well. Peace to his ashes. Obadiah, this will make a beautiful garden. It seems to stretch away to the slopes of Mount Tabor, and even beyond to the snow-clad summit of Mount Hermon. Yonder, I will build a marble portico with white pillars down that slope, and here I will plant oleanders and—

ELIJAH [*who has been seen by the audience behind a clump of shrubs, now comes out a step or two and is suddenly seen by AHAB, who indicating the proposed oleanders finds himself pointing at ELIJAH*]. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel. Hast thou killed and also taken possession?

AHAB [*pale and smitten*]. Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?

ELIJAH. I have found thee, because thou hast set thyself to do evil. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: The children of Ahab that die in the city, the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field, shall the birds of the heaven eat. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine, O King. Yea, and the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the ramparts of Jezreel.

CURTAIN

In print this sketch does not seem a very great accomplishment. But if the Director has obtained it

as an outcome of acting it through, he may feel thankful. The participants feel like explorers in a new continent, as pleased and surprised as a boy after his first swim. What if the pool is only six feet deep and he has swum scarcely a dozen yards! It is a genuine experience in a new medium. He has a right to feel exhilarated. And this is just a beginning.

Taking the sketch as a new starting point, let us go through it next time and put it all into one scene, changing narrative into present action, and bringing out clearly what is going on in Ahab's mind. Let each of the group write out as much as you please, but be sure to act it out first. Look up everything questionable in the Concordance, the Bible, and the Bible dictionary. Better read in Hastings' Bible Dictionary the articles on Jezebel, Jezreel, Naboth, Ahab, Elijah, and Jehu, with the Bible passages referred to in each. The resulting dialogue this time is the following:

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

SCENE I

[A room in KING AHAB's palace at Jezreel. Double or triple arch in rear, blue sky in distance. Large arched doorway down right, up two steps. Nubian guard half naked, long loin-cloth, thrown over left shoulder, heavy ivory earrings, naked scimitar in right hand. Dais left center, with di-

van or couch and cushion. Female slave, not black, with large peacock or Egyptian lotus fan. Another female, slave of the sherbet. KING AHAB is standing up left center looking at NABOTH up right center, whose back is to audience. He is gazing out over portico railing.]

KING. A vineyard twice as large. [*Stretches out both hands. NABOTH makes no sign. KING turns front and comes down a step or two with hesitation. Goes rear, to left end of portico, points to his left.*] A vineyard by the waters of Kishon will I give thee [*points more to his right*] or a vineyard by the Spring of Harrod. I will dig a new winepress out of the rock. . . . I will build thee a watch-tower on the crown of the vineyard, that robbers shall not creep upon thy vineyard unawares. [*KING stands facing him, hand outstretched. Still no answer, except slow shake of head. KING comes down left front, stops, goes right, stops, goes to dais.*] Naboth, the King speaks.

[NABOTH turns, an elderly man, long gray hair and beard. He comes down a few steps and stands with hands folded, in the center of room.]

NABOTH [*bows*]. Let the King speak; thy servant heareth.

KING. Whatsoever the king doeth he doeth for his people, that they may be as other peoples, glorious in honor among the nations. Behold the palaces and

temples I have builded in Samaria, renowned for beauty. Two thousand chariots for the salvation of Israel, and ten thousand men of war with helmets and breastplates of brass, for the protection of my people.* Behold the King's house that I am building here for the glory of Jezreel. Wilt thou shut up the King therein for lack of a garden? Give me thy vineyard, I pray thee, Naboth, that I may have it for a garden of herbs. Behold it lieth at my feet, in the shadow of the King's house; and the King and the Queen would take their ease among the flowers thereof in the cool of the day.

NABOTH. Thou knowest, O King, that Moses commanded that no man should sell his birthright; for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to his own inheritance; to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. [*This is a poser. It admits no argument. So AHAB after a long pause increases the temptation.*]

KING. I will give thee money for thy vineyard. And thou canst buy perfumes from Arabia; and ornaments of gold for the wife of thy bosom; and the silks of Sura for thy daughters.

NABOTH. Thy servant hath no lack, O King. We sit under our own vine and under our own fig tree, by the blessing of Jehovah our God. The lowing of

* Ahab sent 2000 chariots and 10,000 men against the Assyrians at the battle of Karkar.

our kine and the bleating of our sheep is in our ears, and Jehovah fills us with bread.

KING. Ah, then thou canst give me thy vineyard. What is a vineyard between the King . . . and . . . his friend?

NABOTH. The Lord Jehovah forbid that I should part from the inheritance of my fathers even unto the King. [*He bows very low. KING turns right and goes up dais steps. NABOTH turns and goes out left. On step he meets QUEEN and two ladies. He stands aside, bows until they pass him, then goes up steps, turns, with hand uplifted in blessing.*]

NABOTH. The Lord Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; the Lord Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. [*He nods gravely to the guard and goes out.*]

JEZEBEL [*she has swept in to left of center, stops with her back three quarters to audience, listens a moment, turns her head sharply to look at AHAB sitting moodily on throne, then goes up to portico, looks out, but listening, glances at KING, then looks under her eyebrows at NABOTH till he has finished; then she comes down center*]. Well, what sort of exhibition is this, my lord Ahab? One of your Jehovah priests administering consolation? He has a royal arrogance, to raise his hand over

the King and bestow his blessing as if he were a God. [*Sighs.*] I wish some of my Baal priests could learn that noble manner. [*She mimics his gesture rather admiringly.*] "Lift up his countenance upon thee." Where do these Jehovah priests get such quiet assurance? Mine are always bouncing about like mad dervishes. Could I ever teach them to stand like that serenely smiling and say [*raises hand again*], "Baal bless thee and keep thee, make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee." [*Her wistful mood fades; she drops both hands in a gesture of despair and turns up in disgust.*] Ach! priests are a litter of swine.

AHAB [*looks up surprised, rises, comes to her, puts left arm about her shoulders, kisses her right hand gently*]. What has disturbed my golden bird, and ruffled her silken breast?

JEZEBEL. I have just come from the temple of Baal. It smells like a sty. Half drunken priests! They cannot swing a censer without burning my dress. [*Puts finger through hole in her head scarf.*] And their women—faugh—unwashed, unkempt, too slovenly to anoint themselves—and I have done everything for them, given them everything to make the Baal worship beautiful. The brutes!

AHAB. Let them alone, my henna-flower. [*Kisses her hand again.*] The rabble everywhere are a herd of trampling cattle, stupid and headstrong. Let them alone. Come, smile, and I will build thee a

garden-bower with pillars of marble among clusters of oleander.

JEZEBEL. Oh, yes, here [*going to portico*], here on this beautiful slope—whence we can see the rocks of Gilboa and the green hill of Moreh and the snowy top of Hermon. Build me— Why, what troubles my lord?—

AHAB [*turning away*]. I—I had forgotten something. [*He goes to dais, reclines moodily on couch. She shows concern, stealing glances at his face. She nods to fan girl, who comes and fans; other girl goes to taboret and brings sherbet or wine on tray. JEZEBEL hands AHAB a glass of wine.*]

OBADIAH [*outside door left*]. Let the King live forever.

NUBIAN [*advances a couple of steps*]. The King's Chamberlain, O Lady of Heaven. [*JEZEBEL nods; NUBIAN bows, turns and nods to OBADIAH, who enters.*]

OBADIAH [*advances, bows low*]. The board is spread, O King. Will my lord deign to partake of thy servant's bread?

AHAB. Nay, I want nothing.

JEZEBEL. Why, my lord, you . . . you are not fasting?

AHAB. Nay, I cannot eat just now.

JEZEBEL [*sits on top step of dais, leans on KING's knee, hand on shoulder*]. My lord Ahab, what art thou hiding from the heart of thine handmaid?

[*Signs to OBADIAH and attendant to withdraw. They retreat, girls to portico, OBADIAH to steps near door.*] Why is thy countenance clouded? . . . Why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no bread? Speak in mine ear, I pray thee.

AHAB. It is the fanatic stubbornness of Naboth, who dwelleth in Jezreel. I spake unto him this day, and said, "Give me thy vineyard for a garden, because it is near unto the King's palace. And I will give thee a better vineyard, or I will give thee the full worth of it in money."

JEZEBEL [*sternly as she starts to feet*]. And he would not?

AHAB [*shakes head*]. He said, "I may not give thee the inheritance of my fathers."

JEZEBEL [*stiffening*]. Art thou a king? Dost thou govern this people? or do they?

AHAB. No king can endure without the plaudits of the herd.

JEZEBEL. Did my father bend to the rabble?

AHAB. He won the *nobles* who went down to the sea in ships.

JEZEBEL. Well, did your father bow to them?

AHAB. He won the *fighting men*, and they overshadowed the nobles and the rabble. But I must win the voices of all.

JEZEBEL. By yielding to this fellow's insolence?

AHAB. Nay, my Blossom of moonlight, it is not insolence. He fears to depart from the customs of our fathers.

JEZEBEL. Is not the King the father of his people?
Shall this dog disobey and live?

AHAB [*smiling*]. Thine eyes are like pools in the moonlight. Thy hair is like clusters of purple grapes. [*Pause.*] But thou dost *not* know the heart of my people. They must obey the commands of Moses.

JEZEBEL. But if the King give a contrary command. . . .

AHAB. The King cannot give a contrary command.
[*Smiles and nods insistently.*] Even the King must obey the commands of Moses. It is the law, and the religion of my people. [*As he stands erect and quiet, she feels a certain awe. Then she starts at a sudden thought.*]

JEZEBEL. Who was that old man? Was that the man? Was that Naboth? [*Points to door. AHAB nods, then sits and sinks into thought. JEZEBEL goes to portico, leans over rail, searching for some one. She beckons to some one, then watches AHAB and comes to him. She caresses him and speaks gently.*]

JEZEBEL. Thou art weary, my lord Ahab. Let them serve meat for the King's table. [*She takes the royal seal and chain from his neck, while speaking. He does not notice this, but audience must. She crosses toward taboret and couch up left center. Half way she stops as NUBIAN announces somebody.*]

NUBIAN. A captain of the King's Guard, Jehu.

JEZEBEL. Let him enter. [*Sits and writes.*]

[*JEHU enters, looks around, sees the QUEEN beckon to him, and goes to her and bows. She continues writing as she talks.*]

JEZEBEL. Jehu, take this to the nobles, the elders of the city. Tell them to proclaim a feast, and set Naboth at the chief table. Then get base witnesses to swear falsely and accuse him of treason against the King, then carry him out and stone him to death, him and his sons, and his sons' sons. Behold I have sealed it with the King's seal. [*Uses the KING's seal.*] See that it is done. [*JEZEBEL arises and as the soldier goes out she goes to AHAB in a more kindly mood.*] Come, my lord, arise, let us eat bread and let thy heart be merry. [*Takes his hand, nods to OBADIAH, who bows low and precedes them out to the banquet hall. She continues, smiling playfully.*] My lord, I will give you the vineyard of Naboth to possess it.

AHAB [*starts and stops*]. You will give . . . How will you give? [*She smiles.*] Ah, you think you can coax Naboth with your purple eyes! Nay, my golden beauty, he will not yield his conscience to the soft eyes of a woman.

JEZEBEL. I will give you the vineyard.

AHAB [*again startled, mechanically feels for his signet*]. Where is my signet?

JEZEBEL. Here it is.

AHAB. What have you done with it? [*Seizes her shoulders.*] You have not destroyed Naboth?

[*She looks firmly and steadily at him, still smiling.*] You do not yet know my people. If you destroy him, you destroy me and my father's house. What have you done? . . . Have you . . . ? Tell me.

JEZEBEL [*with a slight suggestion of contempt, very calm*]. Why does my lord make a tempest in his soul? Sail on in calm waters, and take the gift that the gods bring to your hands.

AHAB. To destroy the old man for his vineyard! . . . [*Shakes head.*] To kill and then take possession! . . . Contemptible! A robber! . . . O God of my fathers, have I sunk so low! [*Arouses.*] Nay, I will stop it. Give me my signet.

[*She puts her hands behind her back, draws herself to her full height, and smiles.*]

AHAB [*to NUBIAN*]. Call the captains, call Jehu. [*NUBIAN bows and goes out. His hand may still be visible on doorway.*]

JEZEBEL. Why does my lord lash his soul into foam? Drink the cup the gods give you, O son of the morning.

NUBIAN [*reappears, bows*]. The captain of the King's Guard.

[*JEHU enters and bows.*]

AHAB. Jehu, take soldiers and guard Naboth that no evil befall him.

JEZEBEL [*holds out toward AHAB the seal, smiling*].

Here is the King's seal, my lord.

AHAB [*to JEZEBEL*]. Why do you not tell me what

you have done? [*No answer.*] [*To JEHU.*] Jehu, is Naboth . . . safe?

JEHU [*with suggestion of a smile*]. He is safe, O King.

AHAB. I mean is he . . . does he live?

JEHU. He lives, my lord . . . but all men must die.

AHAB [*starts*]. I don't want him to die. Do you understand?

JEHU [*smiles*]. I understand. The King does not seek his life. But the angel of death . . .

AHAB [*in ringing voice of command*]. Bring Naboth here alive.

JEZEBEL. The elders have the writing with the King's seal. Will my lord bring scorn upon himself? for a disobedient, stubborn fellow that spurns the generous offer of the King? Jehu cannot countermand the King's signet. No one but the King himself. Will you go there . . . to argue . . . to squabble like a camel-driver? to save a rebellious dog? What if he be already dead? . . . or dying? Shall not the people shoot out the lip and say with scorn, "The King knoweth not his own mind. He repenteth himself too late. He would have the fellow destroyed, but he is afraid."

[*She throws the seal upon the ground before*

AHAB, turns and goes up to portico, and leans over railing.]

AHAB [*arouses, watches her*]. The golden serpent of Tyre! I am helpless in your snare. Helpless? [*Comes to center.*]

JEZEBEL. Nay, my lord, the King can command . . . if he will. There is your captain, and the King's seal.

[AHAB is much agitated, but makes no move.]

JEHU. Shall thy servant take the King's seal?

[AHAB considers, then turns abruptly to dais and stands one hand on throne, face turned to front. JEZEBEL smiles as her eyes follow AHAB. When he stops, she turns to JEHU and shakes her head, still smiling.]

[OBADIAH enters, comes to left center as JEHU bows to JEZEBEL. As JEHU bows to the KING's back, OBADIAH bows to JEZEBEL, then stands waiting while JEHU leaves. JEZEBEL acknowledges his bow with a nod, glances at AHAB, who is sitting moodily, and goes to his side.]

JEZEBEL. Why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest not? Arise, my lord, and eat and let thy heart be merry. For the light of the King's countenance is life to his servants.

[AHAB rises and they come down the steps. JEZEBEL dismisses OBADIAH with a wave of her hand. They hear the distant murmur of a crowd. AHAB stops alert. JEZEBEL goes swiftly to portico and peers out and listens. She comes down elated.]

JEZEBEL. The vineyard is yours, my lord. So let all thine enemies perish. And the voice of the people is yours also.

AHAB. Ah! he is dead? Peace to his spirit! [*Goes toward right end of portico.*] How beautiful the sun shines upon the vineyard! It will make a delightful garden. It seems to stretch away to the slopes of Moreh, and even beyond the snowy crown of Hermon. By yonder spring I will build you a marble portico [*he turns, takes her hand and comes down, while speaking*], and down the slope on each side, I will plant oleanders and . . . [*his sweeping gesture turns to astonished recoil as he catches sight of ELIJAH, who has entered and stands on the edge of the steps*]. Elijah!

ELIJAH. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: "Hast thou killed and also taken possession? [*KING and QUEEN both shrink back.*] Surely, Jehovah hath seen the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons."

AHAB. Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?

ELIJAH. Yea, I have found thee, because thou hast set thyself to do evil. The King should rule in righteousness, and bring justice and peace to his people. But thou hast beaten down righteousness and turned aside justice with treachery.

AHAB [*a step forward*]. I offered him . . .

ELIJAH [*stopping with uplifted hand*]. Hearken to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel: "I will smite the house of Ahab into splinters, and shake it out of my lap. [*Shakes skirt of robe.*] The children of Ahab that die in the city, the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field, shall the birds

of the heaven eat. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine, O King."

JEZEBEL. Hew him in pieces. [*Eyes blazing, full light.*]

ELIJAH. Yea, and the dogs shall eat Jezebel [*she shrinks and sinks to floor*] by the ramparts of Jezreel. For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and his princes shall rule in righteousness.

[*JEZEBEL is sitting on floor, disconsolate, in her eyes a far-off look. AHAB stands limp. The NUBIAN has shrunk back into corner of doorway. ELIJAH is standing with uplifted hand dominant, on steps as curtain slowly descends.*]

CHAPTER THREE

KEEPING TO THE TRUTH

It seems to be very difficult even for writers of Sunday-school and church material to keep to the simple truth. There is apparently an irresistible impulse towards modifying it a little, doubtless to make it more easily teachable, or more safely moral. This is nothing new. The tendency can be seen through centuries.

Human beings are born philosophers. Apart from sheer animal impulses of self-preservation, their strongest and most unquenchable instinct is to arrange everything in sight in a unified pattern. If certain bits of the universe do not easily find a place in the pattern, they are tossed aside as intruding fragments of chaos, useless, unnecessary, and dangerous to the smooth-running machinery just set a-going. People everywhere recognize facts as the raw material out of which the truth is spun, just as roses are the raw material out of which perfume is distilled. Truth is the distilled essence of facts, and after the precious essence has been extracted the crushed facts are mere pumice, fit only for compost. It is very natural, then, that the allegorical essence, the symbolic extract, the doctrinal distillation should

come to seem far more important and precious than the mere crude facts.

Thus with the passage of time the *actual* becomes dimmer and dimmer, the *historical* fades into a very misty and neutral-colored past, the *human* ossifies into a statuesque conventional something that no longer breathes, pulsates and yearns, but is transmogrified into an abstract and orderly procedure. Abraham or Isaiah become transmuted into an *ism*. As a result of this conventionalizing process, if the Angel Gabriel awakened you suddenly to introduce you to Moses, you would not expect to feel the touch of a skin smooth with Egyptian ointment, but rather a tablet of sandstone, with the chiseled lines of the ten commandments.

One can scarcely overestimate the value of the essence that each human being distills from the facts of life. But every soul must distill it fresh for himself. It becomes a deadly poison to the human spirit when we take it ready-made from the alembics of others. It is, however, so much easier to get things already fashioned, that most of us accept a great many conventionalities for realities. Exercising the judgment is such an arduous mental process that we shrink from it, and so the use of the critical faculties becomes somewhat rare. But criticism is the salt, the preservative, of civilization. Without alert criticism every good movement becomes senile with dry-rot. Unless we are willing, nay, determined, at whatever laborious effort, to practice close discrimination,

to examine thoroughly the matters that come to our attention,—unless we insist upon a strenuous investigation to ascertain what actually happened on the occasion in question, we shall never get at the naked truth. It is always easier to get an abstract notion of things in general,—rather vague and fuzzy around the edges,—than to bring one's mind to a focus upon a concrete, clear-cut image of some definite object. But if in the rush of this mechanical age, we desire to help folk to lay hold of spiritual realities, we must cease to scoop up facts with a wholesale carelessness, and instead, treat each individual fact with respect. We must take enough time and trouble to see people as people; not as mere moving objects, but as human beings, in whom we are interested. We must observe their actual deeds, their historical surroundings, the psychological processes of their minds, the human feelings, the hopes and fears and throbbings of their hearts. With a conventional habit of mind it is not only easier to “dramatize” a moral lesson, or a general precept than to dramatize an actual situation from life; but it is only too easy to manufacture imagined facts in which to incorporate the lesson, rather than to look up scores and perhaps hundreds of details needed to give the actual facts and present a life-like situation from history.

Hence we find that a great deal of material printed for the use of Sunday-school occasions falls into this easy way, and symbolizes or allegorizes till every

one is weary. The authors of these "pageants" not only suffer from a long-established habit of "thinking" in conventional terms, but even more damaging, many of these thinkings they took aboard when they were very young, with the inevitable result that their conceptions are childish as well as rigid. This condition is so general that it is somewhat discouraging. Successive generations have received in childhood the so-called truths about God, religion, salvation and duty. Their fond and pious teachers assimilated the truths for them, and carefully removing everything that might damage their innocent minds, supplied them, spiritually speaking, with a sort of boneless codfish, a symbolic, or synthetic, substitute for a real, fresh, vitaminic food.

There are of course occasions when symbolic or allegorical material is permissible and artistic. In general we might say that it should not be attempted until after a group has had considerable experience in producing concrete scenes of actual human life. Our first task then is to become familiar with the common details of the human life set before us.

As the manners, customs, dress and occupations of the people portrayed in the Bible were very different from our own, two points should be kept constantly in mind. The dress, implements, occupation and general setting should give the true local color. But while thus emphasizing the difference between their circumstances and ours, we must also make unmistakably clear their likeness to us in a common hu-

manity; otherwise we cannot understand their motives, nor sympathize with their feelings. These two factors—the difference in setting, and the likeness in humanity—are the most important considerations in keeping to the truth dramatically.

Most of the incidents recorded in the Bible have for their background rural rather than city conditions. They cannot be truly presented unless the Director and the group are genuinely rural-minded, or can by sympathetic imagination and sincere simplicity enter into pioneer conditions without any taint of exaggeration or burlesque. But still more is needed. The country life of the Bible is not the thrifty comfortable farm life of our New England or Virginia grandfathers. Behind Hebrew life there was always the desert. With its scorching winds, its scarcity of water, its ever-shifting pathways, it was an ocean of sand, lonely, vast and treacherous. Its children spent their life escaping from one used-up oasis to the refuge of another. Their home, a strip of goat's hair tent-cloth, stretched now near a brackish spring of oozy water, and now on the sheltered side of a blistering rock. Their food was scanty and of the coarsest. Their rough garments were woven of camel's hair or from the wool of a scrawny sheep.

A woman's life was peculiarly bare and hard, her only furniture a rug on the sandy or rocky floor, a small chest or box to hold her treasured bridal garments, a cushion or two, with a few pans and pots for cooking, and some earthen jars to hold olive oil

or honey. Her jewelry, gold coins or plates strung together, she wore in her ears, her nose, or across her forehead.

Abraham, although he was a man of wealth, possessing great flocks and herds, doubtless lived without anything that we would call comfort. Moses after leaving the luxuries of the Egyptian palace lived as a desert nomad for the rest of his life.

In the next few centuries, the Hebrews gradually gave up wandering, built houses, tilled the soil and lived a more settled life. Villages grew up and soon there was division of labor, instead of each household making everything it used.

By the time of Solomon we find developing the social exclusiveness of city life, and the growing chasm between the rich and the poor. Thereafter there is constantly thrust upon our attention the ostentation, the luxury, the arrogant lawlessness of the ruling class, and the sullen smoldering hatred of the poor whom they oppressed, whose wrongs are persistently voiced by the great prophets, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah and the rest.

But even these pictures of Oriental luxury, with "houses of ivory," and purple garments embroidered in gold, have for their darker background the same desert life. All this barbaric splendor is borne upon the desert's bosom, and it all sinks back into the desert when the cities and palaces are destroyed by some ruthless conqueror, who seizes the glittering wealth and drags off the people for slaves.

Every stage setting, whether we use curtains or realistic scenery, must be planned with this desert background in mind. The costumes and furnishings must be true to this setting. Men's thoughts and actions must be based upon it.

On the other hand the actions, the tones of the voice, the feelings expressed, should be what our own would be if we were in that situation. A mother's love, a father's pride, a friend's loyalty, an enemy's hatred, these are the same there as here, then as now. You must enter into this strange setting with a vivid imagination, adjusting yourself completely to the simple conditions of life, or every movement you make will be a screaming announcement that it is all unreal. You must succeed in submerging your own habits and individuality, so that your ultra-civilized personality will not break through. You must go barefoot as if you were used to nothing else, bow with a deep salaam though you are not naturally gracious, eat with your fingers as if spilling gravy over your bosom were a common occurrence. But much more important than this local color, this outward appearance, you must interpret these far-off persons so clearly and naturally that we shall understand their life, their motives, their hopes, their aspirations, their fears, their likes and dislikes, the things that seemed common to them, and the things that seemed strange. Thus only can you bring close to us their joys and their sorrows. If we can share these, we can enter into the life of

any people, and we share these most readily in the homely affairs of life.

We are now ready to make a strenuous and sustained effort to get genuine local color. By this we must mean the true historical setting, which will give not only the appearance, dress and customs of the people; but also their ways of thinking,—in what they resembled us, in what they differed from us. The first difficulty that we encounter is not the lack of information, and the arduous search for details of this far-off life, though that is difficult enough to discourage many. The greater difficulty is to raise the incident selected from the intellectual and emotional level of a child's story to the level of an intelligent adult. This is a real task.

First impressions are deep and lasting. Most of these Bible stories first came to us in our early youth and were of course interpreted then by our childhood's experience and assimilated into our minds with childish contents. The Church today is suffering woefully from its members retaining so largely their childhood's conception of religion, of the Bible, of duty, of prayer. It is small wonder that men and women busy with big things should turn from such a presentation of religion as too petty to interest them. And it is even less wonder that clear-eyed, fearless young men and women in the intellectual and moral vigor of their youth should toss aside rather irreverently religious conceptions that are too often expressed in the language of a child's mind.

In glancing over books of Bible plays "for young people" we find, for instance, several different dramatizations of the story of Joseph in which his coat of many colors is represented as a bit of rather foolish vanity on the part of his father Jacob. The conspicuously ornamented Joseph in a sort of crazy-quilt dressing-gown is shown as a rather unlovable youngster about eight years old, sent by his doting father upon an errand of a hundred and fifty miles.

But the record indicates that Joseph was between seventeen and twenty-seven years old. He was the eldest son of Jacob's chosen and covenanted wife, Rachel. Leah had been deceitfully foisted upon the bridegroom on the wedding night. For some reason, probably very creditable to him, he did not repudiate her, but as soon as her family would permit he married Rachel also. Rachel's sons, Joseph and Benjamin, held in his mind a different status from the sons of Leah and the concubines whom he evidently grouped together. It is quite probable that he considered Joseph as his heir, and intended him to be the chief of the tribe at his own death. If so, it was natural that he should give him a superior coat or cloak woven with an intricate, colorful pattern.*

This lifts the story from the level of a petted child with a senile father, and shows us something of the congenital hatred and murderous intrigue that seems to be inherent in polygamous families. It is an

* The scholars do not speak with certainty about the exact meaning of the Hebrew phrasing.

incidental picture of social ramifications that profoundly affect communal life.

If we can resist the temptation to point a moral, and make a real historical effort to see the sons of the lesser women selling the son of the favorite wife, we may get for our first draft something like the following:

THE SELLING OF JOSEPH

[The scene is the Plain of Dothan. The brothers are sitting, lying, and standing near a little fire where a pot is cooking. One is whittling on a shepherd's staff; another is making or adjusting a leather sling. One is mending a leather bag or scrip, whilst another has taken off his sandal to change a thong. DAN, who is standing and has stepped aside to throw away something, suddenly sees some object in the distance.]

JUDAH. What's the matter, Dan?

DAN. A man coming! Look here, Judah. Who is that? Doesn't it look like Joseph?

JUDAH *[after keen look to left]*. It is Joseph! The young dreamer!

GAD. Had us bowing down to him, insolent little beast!

NAPHTALI *[starting up from reclining to a sitting posture]*. Joseph? Let's kill him and throw him

down that pit and see what comes of his impudent dreams.

JUDAH. Nay, I will not kill him. He is our brother.

Let not a brother's blood be on our hands.

REUBEN. Let us put him down the pit without killing him.

JUDAH. Aye, that's better.

[DAN and NAPHTALI go out left and bring JOSEPH in.]

NAPHTALI. Here's the boy with the beautiful robe.

[*Snatches it off.*]

JOSEPH. Father sent you a camel's burden of bread with some new figs and a jar of honey.

SIMEON. Good! Naphtali, Dan, go, help Joseph bring them up.

[*Two or three of them, including REUBEN, who picks up a rope, take him out. A moment later a cry is heard drowned in murmur.*]

REUBEN [*returning*]. Well, I will go down into the valley and search for some grass where we can lead the flocks. You can gather them up and follow me. Better start them today. [*He goes out left.*]

[*The brothers sit down to eat, laughing and talking. ASHER sees somebody coming from right.*]

ASHER. A caravan! [*Several start up.*] They're getting off the camels. They are coming up here.

[*Enter from right three MIDIANITES, who bow.*]

THEIR CHIEF. Peace to your tents. [*Looking around for the Hebrew chief, some one waves toward SIMEON, the oldest in the absence of REUBEN.*] Peace, to you, my Father.

SIMEON [*motions the strangers to be seated*]. And to you peace.

[*Bread is passed. They break off and eat, talking quietly.*]

SIMEON. Have ye travelled far?

CHIEF. From beyond the Jordan. We are buying spices, dried gums, and medicine herbs. Have you any to sell us?

SIMEON. Nay, our tents and our homes are far off, at Hebron. Here we just follow the flocks.

CHIEF. Peradventure you have wool to sell.

SIMEON. Nay, we have not sheared the sheep yet. Come back a month hence.

CHIEF. Alas, my Father, we go down to Egypt with our caravan. We shall not return for many days. Hast thou indeed nothing to sell us?

LEVI. We can sell you a lad for a slave.

CHIEF. Thy word is like refreshing dew upon thy servants.

SIMEON. Dan, where did you put that boy?

[*DAN and NAPHTALI go to bring in JOSEPH.*]

CHIEF. Boy? We care not to buy children. They perish on a hard march. They have no strength.

SIMEON. Nay, the lad is no child. He hath the frame and sinew of a man. He can do all the work of a shepherd.

LEVI. He is a well-taught lad, of much learning. He is a scribe and has the pen of a ready writer.

ZEBULON. Aye, he knows everything. Behold, he comes.

[*Enter DAN and NAPHTALI with JOSEPH.*]

SIMEON. What will you give for him?

CHIEF. Alas, he has no strength. He is too slender for a slave.

LEVI. But he can read and write. He is a slave fit for a King. Give us fifty pieces of silver, and you may have him.

CHIEF. Alas, thy servants are poor. Thou wouldst take the bread from our children. We will give thee ten pieces, my Father.

JUDAH. Nay, a camel is worth that. The boy would be a gift at forty pieces.

CHIEF. Alas, thy servants are beneath thy feet. Take twenty pieces and let us go.

LEVI [*to SIMEON*]. Better take it.

SIMEON. Well, the lad is thine. Go in peace.

[*JOSEPH breaks away from DAN and NAPHTALI and clasps the arms of JUDAH.*]

JOSEPH. O Judah, don't let them take me away.

[*JUDAH pushes him off roughly but not angrily.*]

JOSEPH. My father, O my father. You will drag his gray head to the grave in sorrow. [*The MIDIANITES take him out.*]

JUDAH. Our father? Aye, he will grieve. . . .

[*Starting as he thinks of the effect on his*

father. He stands with fixed, absent gaze until NAPHTALI passes with JOSEPH's robe.]

JUDAH. What are you going to do with his robe?

NAPHTALI. Keep it for my boy.

LEVI. No, the chief might see it. Better tear it and dip it in blood and bring it to the old man and he will think a wild beast has slain the lad.

JUDAH [*stands thinking, then speaks with a note of regret*]. He is an old man. . . . But I suppose he will get over it.

CURTAIN

The seventh chapter of the book of Judges gives us a story that usually seems very unconvincing. Can we by more careful examination get at the truth? The Hebrews had been ravaged for seven years by ruthless bands of marauding Midianites that drove off their cattle, carried away their grain, trampled their vineyards and broke down their olive trees. They took away every man's weapons, and if he resisted they killed him and seized his wife and children for slaves.

Gideon was beating out a few sheaves of barley, crouched on the inside of a wine-press, hoping the sharp eyes of the marauders might not see the flying chaff and dust. In the heat, discomfort, and resentment, the shame of it all came upon him. And then a messenger of God, perhaps the unnamed prophet of verse eight, dropped a word that kindled

the flame in his heart, and stirred him to action. Perhaps he brought Gideon word that the Midianites had murdered his brothers at Tabor (8:18-19). Gideon was so aroused that he sent out messengers and gathered a large number of men on Mount Gilboa.

[The curtain rises on an anxious group of leaders.

SHEMA, ELIEZER, MAON and ZORAH are in the foreground. Some men with a sickle or corn knife tied on a pole are seen in background. Enter GERSHON.]

GERSHON. The Midianites and the Amalekites are like locusts for multitude, and their camels are without number, like the sand on the seashore.

They are encamped on the Hill of Moreh.

SHEMA. On the Hill of Moreh?

GERSHON. Yes, we can almost hear them.

ELIEZER. I am afraid it was a rash venture for Gideon to creep into the enemy's camp. I hope he gets back safely.

ZORAH. Why didn't he send some one else to spy out the situation? He will never return. We may as well choose another captain and plan the attack.

ELIEZER. What other captain would dare attack such a multitude? They have camels enough to carry away every hidden sack of grain and every unmarried maiden. We have only 30,000 men and half of them have no real weapons.

MAON. Why, here he comes. [*Going eagerly to meet him.*] Gideon, we had almost given you up.

ELIEZER. Well, what did you find out?

GIDEON. They are scared out of their wits. [*Laughing.*] I heard one fellow telling a dream he had had. He said, "A barley cake swelled up bigger and bigger, and finally fell into the Midianite camp and knocked down a whole swath of tents." [*Laughter.*] And one of the listeners gasped out, "That's a sign. It's their terrible captain, Gideon. I tell you we're lost." [*More laughter.*] Yes, Jehovah has delivered them into our hands.

ELIEZER. I think our men are as nervous as they are.

GIDEON. Well, Eliezer, I wish you would go out and announce that whosoever is afraid or trembling may return home. But if any man has a sword, make him leave it. Swords are scarce. We need them.

ELIEZER. We need men too, and if you send them that message you won't have any one left!

GIDEON. We'll have plenty. The Lord has delivered them into our hands. But we can't use a mob; we need brave and steady men. I am going to make an attack tonight—in the dark. Gershon, take thirty or forty men and scatter back several miles and get three hundred large pitchers.

GERSHON. Pitchers? Water pitchers?

GIDEON. Yes, large earthenware pitchers. Bring them back here before sunset. Zorah, will you

take some men and get three hundred torches? Maon, will you take a number of men and see if you can get us three hundred horns?

MAON. Horns? What kind of horns?

GIDEON. Horns for trumpets, to make a noise. All of you get back here before sunset with as many of them as you can find. [GERSHON, MAON and ZORAH go out. Enter ELIEZER.]

ELIEZER. More than two-thirds of the people are going home. Do you think it's wise?

SHEMA. I am afraid their going will start up a panic among those that stay.

GIDEON. Well, we will have to sift them and use only those that are staunch. Have all that are left go down to the foot of the mountain and drink. It's the last water they will get today. [SHEMA goes out.]

KOHATH [*going to rear*]. My, they are rushing down with a whoop. They have no more order than sheep. It would be terrible if the Midianites should attack them now.

GIDEON. Ah! We can test them right now. Let us go down there, and every one that lies down flat on his face to drink, send him back yonder to that knob, and all those that just stoop or kneel, and dip up the water in their palms, all those that keep on the lookout while they are drinking, send them back here.

[GIDEON *faces right front*.]

GIDEON. O Lord Jehovah, wherewith shall I save

Israel? For the Midianites have come upon us like a swarm of locusts, and the hearts of our people are brought low with terror. Behold, I have broken down the altar of Baal and called the people to repentance. Lord Jehovah, stretch forth thy mighty arm, and save us.

[Curtain closes for a few seconds to indicate the passage of a few hours. It has grown darker.

ELIEZER, KOHATH, and SHEMA enter from left talking. They see GIDEON and stop, silent. GIDEON hears them and turns, left front. Just at this moment ZORAH and two men with torches enter from right. GIDEON turns to them.]

GIDEON. Well, Zorah, I see you have some torches.

ZORAH. Yes, we have more than three hundred.

SHEMA. Good. *[Looking off left.]* Here comes Gershon with the pitchers. Do you want them filled with water, Gideon?

GIDEON. No, after we light the torches, we will put them in the pitchers to keep them from being seen.

KOHATH *[looking to rear]*. Here is Maon. Well, Maon, did you find enough trumpets?

MAON. Yes, some of them do not blow very well, but we have about three hundred.

GIDEON *[taking one of each, while speaking]*. Give a trumpet and a torch, and a pitcher to each of our picked men. Then, Maon, take a hundred men and slip down this side of the hill and come up to the enemy's camp from the southwest and spread your men along the edge. Zorah, you take another

hundred and approach their camp from the south-east and spread out. I will take another hundred and creep around the hill and come on them from the north. It will take us longer, so the rest of you must keep quiet until I give the signal. When you hear my company blow the horns, all of you do the same. Then wave the torches and dash the pitchers to pieces on the ground and shout, "The sword of Jehovah." Then let every one of you smite every man that has no torch.

SEVERAL LEADERS. Good! That's a great scheme! That will get them! Ha, Gideon! The sword of Jehovah and Gideon!

[As they go out jubilant, the curtain falls.]

The fourth and fifth chapters of Judges give us another picture of troublous times, and the heroic courage of women. Religion was at a low ebb, and cowardice was common. Sisera, King Jabin's chief captain, had built nine hundred chariots of iron, fear-spreading instruments of invincible oppression. There was no organized government. Every little community cringed by itself, afraid to provoke attack by the well-organized bands of the Canaanites. They were suspicious of each other, and there was no outstanding leader. Deborah, a wise woman, consulted doubtless by those in sickness and perplexity, gradually gained a great reputation for wisdom and practical judgment. She attributed her successful advisings to religion and gained more and more skill

in spiritual insight. Finally she was recognized as a prophetess and her solemn utterances as messages from God. She opposed the "new gods," held up religion as the supreme loyalty and built up a sense of duty to each other and to Jehovah.

SCENE I *

[DEBORAH *under the palm tree, seated. Two or three men seated or lying around. MAN enters, breathless.*]

DEBORAH. Did you find Barak for me?

MAN. I found him, and behold he cometh.

[*Enter BARAK.*]

BARAK. Peace to thee, Deborah, mother of Israel.

DEBORAH. The God of Peace bless thee, Barak, thou mighty man of valor.

BARAK. Why hast thou sent for me, Deborah?

DEBORAH. For twenty years I have heard the groans of our people under the oppression of Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host. Is it not time to smite him?

BARAK. Alas, my mother, there is scarcely sword or spear left in Israel. And every smithy is watched.

DEBORAH. Every man can make a bow and arrows secretly. And they can bind scythe-blades on poles for spears.

BARAK. But Sisera hath nine hundred iron chariots and a well-armed host, with breastplates of brass.

DEBORAH. It is now the season of sudden rains.

* Chapters IV, V, of Judges.

BARAK [*startled by her strange remark*]. Sudden rains!

DEBORAH. Aye, thunderstorms. Then the river Kishon swells out and the whole valley is a soft bog. The wheels and the horses will sink in the mire.

BARAK. Well! I . . . I never thought . . .

DEBORAH. If thou wilt gather ten thousand men, and hide them on the woody slopes of Mount Tabor, I will entice Sisera to the river Kishon, and Jehovah will deliver him into thy hand.

BARAK. Who am I in Israel, that the princes of the people should follow me to battle? They will surely say, "Barak useth us to gain his own spoil." But thou, Deborah, art the prophetess, the mother of Israel; if thou go with me, I will summon them in the name of Jehovah, and all shall know that this is his battle and that Barak seeks not spoil for himself.

DEBORAH. My son, I will go with thee, and because thou dost not walk proudly, but will share thy glory with a woman, behold, thou shalt deliver thy people from the hand of the oppressor.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[*Tent of Jael in HEBER's camp on lower slope of Mount Tabor. Jael spins with a distaff. DEBORAH stands at tent opening, just going out.*]

DEBORAH. Fear not, daughter. Jehovah can save Israel, even by the hand of a woman. Remember, and pray.

[She goes out. JAEL resumes her spinning, sings to calm her nervousness.]

Jehovah answer thee in the day of trouble,
The God of Jacob set thee up on high.
Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
But we will make mention of Jehovah our God.*
Answer me when I call, O God of righteousness,
Set me at large, now in distress,
Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.†

JAEL. Oh, when will my lord return? Jehovah preserve him from the thunderings, and the floods of waters, and from the swords of the enemy. *[Chanting.]* "Jehovah is my light and my salvation, Whom shall I fear." Sh—some one runneth. *[She lays down distaff and goes quickly to tent flap and looks out.]* Heber? My lord? *[Sees it is not her husband.]* Sisera! The captain! Fleeing! with no pursuers. *[Eyes flash, clasps hands and swells to full size, as she decides, calling aloud.]* Turn in, my lord Sisera, turn in hither.

[She holds curtain aside to admit fugitive. SISERA enters, dishevelled, panting deeply, and sinks down on floor-mattress where JAEL points.]

* Ps. 20, 1, 7.

† Ps. 4:1.

SISERA. Hide me, woman. Hide me, and I will give thee my gold armlets. [*He takes them off, drops them on floor as he sinks down on mattress.*]

JAEL. I will hide thee [*bringing rug to throw over him*], my lord Sisera.

SISERA. Give me, I pray thee, water to drink, for I perish with thirst.

JAEL. Nay, here is milk, for thy strength is spent—drink my lord,—and here is soft cheese, new curdled, eat my lord—and sleep.

[*He drinks, eats rapidly, and lies down, but raises his head and shoulders anxiously, listening.*]

SISERA. Dost thou hear any one? Stand at the door of the tent and if any one cometh asking, “Is there any man here?” thou shalt say, “No.”

JAEL [*with meaning*]. Yea, there will be no man here.

[*She alternately looks out and watches him, till he sleeps. She tries gently to draw SISERA's sword, but cannot without awaking him. She looks around for some weapon. Shakes her head. Thinks of something, goes out and brings iron tent-pin and mallet, hesitates.*]

JAEL. But he is a guest! I have given him food—oh, I should be accursed forever. [*Lays down mallet, starts to lay down iron pin, but retains it.*]
O Lord Jehovah, speak unto thine handmaid. Shall I smite or forbear? How many mothers and babes has he slain in Israel? If I slay him not,

wilt thou hold me guilty of the blood of the next mothers and babes? [*Starts.*] And Heber and my sons! Nay. [*Quickly gets mallet.*] God hath delivered thee into my hand. What said Deborah? Jehovah will save Israel by the hand of a woman.

[She cautiously comes close to SISERA, kneels and drives the iron pin into his temple as the curtain quickly falls.]

Perhaps no person in the Bible, unless it be Jeremiah, has suffered more misrepresentation than Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary. She is usually spoken of as a sordid or at least a kitchen-minded woman, whose heavy mind and dull soul could never rise above the drudgery of cooking and scrubbing. How many of the people that refer piously to Martha with patronizing contempt have read her story with sufficient care to discover the facts?

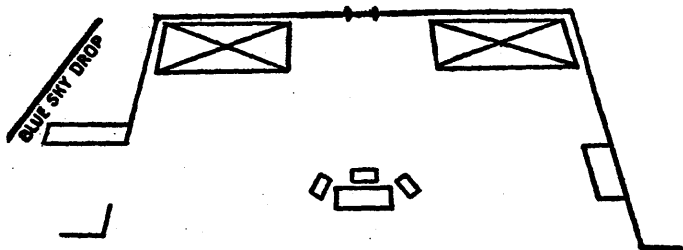
So far as the gospel records directly show, there were only two persons spiritually alert enough to discover the central truth of Christianity. Curiously enough the two persons that reveal this sensitiveness of soul were Simon Peter and Martha. Each of these penetrated beyond the outward appearance and discovered the hidden truth, the impossible fact. Jesus was a village carpenter, the son of peasants. Judged by the ordinary standards of his own day—that of the merchants, the bankers, the public men,—he was

not a successful man. Prominent citizens doubtless patronized him with a tolerant sneer. Worse still he was actually rather queer. He did not keep step with the crowd. He was different. Even his brethren did not believe in him.

Yet in spite of all this smug labelling of him as a coarse common laborer, one woman had keen enough spiritual discernment to thrust aside this jumble of appearances and realize that she was touching God. Because she was spiritual-minded, she was sensitive to eternal truth. She knew the torch of God when she felt it. Men that were unusually fair-minded and unawed by the Pharisees said, "He is a good man." Occasionally one would venture, "He is one of the prophets." But Martha, with the clear sight of a really spiritual faith, went far beyond these, and even under the depressing shadow of her brother's death, she could say, "Thou art the Christ, the son of God."

She was evidently the eldest of the three, for she was considered the head of the family (Luke 10:38). Apparently Mary had gone through some youthful experience that had caused grief and anxiety to Martha, who had perhaps been a mother to her younger sister. It is more than possible that Martha's perturbation was maternal solicitude rather than peevishness. Our conception of her conduct in this incident must at least be consistent with the unusual spirituality which the gospel record attributes to her.

The scene is a very plain room with stone walls. In the left wall is a fireplace, something like a black-smith's. A broad stone shelf about two feet above the floor, a protruding chimney two feet above that. On the up-stage side of the fire shelf is a rude squarish clay oven burnt like a tile. The door is a round hole in the sloping end, with an earthenware lid. In the right wall is a doorway, which admits golden



sunlight. Through this can be seen a glimpse of a fig tree and bright colored tropical flowers. On the upper side of the doorway a stone seat extends upon which, later, Mary sits. There is evidently a similar seat, unseen, on the lower side. In the rear wall rather high up there is a small window. It might be latticed. A narrow couch or cot is in each of the rear corners, neatly covered with a blanket. A very low small table is in the middle of the room, with some leather cushions on the floor beside it. There are no chairs. A wooden stool stands near the fireplace. Two water pots stand near the door. An armful of fagots and twigs lies on the lower side of the fireplace, on the floor.

[*MARTHA alone in house preparing supper. JESUS outside seated on low wall, back to us. MARY outside and in. LAZARUS in and out of door.*]

[*Afternoon of the day on which LAZARUS was raised from the tomb. MARTHA and MARY cooking.*]

MARTHA. These barley waffles are nearly done.

MARY. My! they look nice.

MARTHA. Yes, they're crisp and brown. Get some honey, Mary, out of the jar and put it in the glass bowl I got from Sidon.

MARY. Oh, are you going to use that? It's too beautiful to use— And as thin as—as a soap bubble. It might burst. [*MARTHA has opened an earthen pot simmering on fire. MARY sniffs with delight.*] Oh, Martha! Partridges? You darling, where did you get them?

MARTHA [*smiling*]. Now run along and get the honey for the barley cakes. [*Going to door.*] I wonder why Zilpah doesn't come.

MARY. Did you send her down to the spring? No, there is the water pot.

MARTHA. I sent her to the market place to get some lettuce herbs for a salad.

MARY [*looking out door*]. When will he come, and Lazarus? Oh, I can't believe it yet, Martha! Raised from the dead! Snatched from that awful tomb! Martha, it's impossible!

MARTHA. Yes, dear, the best things of life are always

impossible. That's why life is filled with the joy of wonder.

MARY [*unconsciously imitating in low full tones*].

"Lazarus, come forth." Oh, my heart is all curly and crinkly still. I was so afraid, when he said it, that my heart just stopped, as if he was reckless and—and interfering with God. It seemed so daring—I just shut my eyes. You know, as I always do when lightning is coming. And then it was all right. Oh, Martha, I'm so glad I went. When Zilpah came for me, I was just done. I didn't want to drag myself off the couch. And going to the grave was awful. I thought I couldn't. I'm so thankful you sent for me, Martha, and that I dragged myself down there. "Lazarus, come forth." It was like the triumph of the glorious day of judgment.

MARTHA. "Jehovah saveth the righteous, and the meek will be ransom forever."

MARY. Weren't you affrighted when he bade them open the tomb?

MARTHA. Yes, at first. But the moment after I objected, all in a flash I knew what was going to happen.

MARY. You knew! Why, Martha! Who ever heard—?

MARTHA. Something kept running through my head. He shall surely rise in the resurrection at the Great Day—the resurrection at the Great Day. I was just holding on to that, and murmuring it over

and over to myself when Jesus took my hand and whispered, "I am the resurrection and the life." His words went right through me. Everything seemed full of golden sunlight and I knew, I knew— And it just flashed on my mind. "The long-expected Christ. Thou art the son of God." Then I sent Zilpah to bring you quick.

MARY [*hears footsteps, goes right*]. Here she is now with the— No, it's brother and Jesus. Oh, he's here! [*She runs out.*]

MARTHA. But Mary, help me. Sweeting with—such a girl! [*LAZARUS appears in doorway.*] Her impulses always sweeping her— Well, I'm glad it's the Master she's enthusiastic about.

LAZARUS. Yes, that's a comfort, isn't it? We needn't worry any more about her rash and excitable doings, since he saved her from disgrace with that Roman captain.

MARTHA. The child certainly was possessed by a devil, a devil of impetuosity that was driving, driving her. Oh, I'm so thankful that—

LAZARUS. That the Master caught her in time.

MARTHA. Why, I'm forgetting the partridges. [*Hastens to fire.*] And why doesn't Zilpah come with the lettuce herbs for salad?

LAZARUS. She is leaning against a sunny wall somewhere dreaming day dreams. Young folk all do it some time or another.

MARTHA. Yes, we must be patient with them and be thankful they are doing nothing worse. But it is

annoying just now when I need her so much to help with the supper. I wish you would go down through the shady lane, and see if you can find her, Lazarus. Would you mind going?

LAZARUS. No. I'll go. Very glad to. But Zilpah will probably come up the street of stairs this time.
[*Going out.*]

MARTHA. Thank you, brother, you are a constant comfort. [LAZARUS *turns in door, smiles, and waves his hand to her.*] I'm afraid I'll have to call Mary a minute, and she's so occupied with Jesus. [She *glances at the waffles, then lifts pot and tastes the juice of the partridges, adds a pinch of salt. Then goes to door.*] My lord, I am all alone, preparing the supper. Do you not think it regrettable that Mary takes no notice of the press I am in? I wish you would suggest to her that she help a bit.

VOICE OF JESUS [*off right*]. Martha, Martha, you do so much for us. You are always busy doing nice things. I venture that you have four or five dishes preparing for supper.

MARTHA. Only three.

VOICE. Fewer would do, Martha, or even one. Most people in these hard times are thankful to get one dish. And do not worry about Mary. She *has* chosen the best dish. Let her feed upon that. Bread and meat and herbs are not really so important as that, are they, Martha? I am glad she

likes to sit with me, and ask me her strange questions.

MARTHA [*turns down*]. Yes, so am I—but I'm afraid the cakes and the partridges will burn.

VOICE. We'll hope not. But don't let these delicacies drag her away, Martha. Life is more than meat, you know.

MARTHA [*stirs pot, looks in oven, adds a stick to fire, then stands center musing*]. Yes, eating and drinking and dressing are not— [*Shaking head. Suddenly lifts her head with a new thought.*] Life! [*Raises head and stretches out her arms in ecstasy.*] Eternal Life! [*Quietly clasps her hands and drops her head upon her bosom.*] Yea, thou hast the words of eternal life.

CURTAIN

Let us take another example. The common conception of Moses seems to oscillate between a beautiful baby fascinating a circle of Egyptian women, and a white-bearded worker of wonders. His marvellous loyalty is scarcely seen. A young man brought up to be the possible heir of the Egyptian throne is so unspoiled by the years of luxury that instead of accepting the enticing situation, he identifies himself with the despised slave race. When he tries to help them, they themselves betray him, and he must flee for his life. He settles into a happy philosophic life in Midian, but his sense of loyalty

to his kinsfolk grows into a driving imperative which brings him back to Egypt to attempt the Herculean task of inspiring the Hebrew, slave-minded race to seek their liberty. The amazing personal magnetism, the statesmanlike foresight, the profound moral convictions, the poetic inspiration, the sublime spiritual exaltation and sympathy, suggested so constantly in the story,—what a mine of wealth for the admirer of character to dramatize!

After blocking out in the rough this character-study of Moses; after seeing that he bulks large among the greatest men of the earth as a poet, a philosopher, an organizer, a general, a law-giver, a spiritual teacher, a statesman, a popular hero, it would be a delightful but almost overwhelming task to present adequately the deep convictions, the sublime aspirations, the powerful motives and the infinite resources of this stupendous man. The precious secret is that his resources were all rooted deep in his profound and fascinating religious experience. That must be our study if we would successfully dramatize Moses.

Such a glimpse of the Bible material may be discouraging to those that have been brought up upon the conventional conceptions. But it is surely time to stop playing with wooden spades upon the beach, and launch out upon the almost unknown sea. There is in this a comfort long ago pointed out by Carlyle. A great subject, even if taken up by an ignorant or unprepared person, will never fail to yield valuable

results to an earnest seeker for truth. Such a person acquires insight and skill with incredible rapidity. His progress will be measured by his open-minded alertness and the quality of his perseverance.

CHAPTER FOUR

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS—PLOT

It is usual for purposes of discussion to analyze a play into plot, character and emotion. But these are not component parts that can be separated and put together like the parts of a machine. We might better compare it to the nerves, the blood and the muscles of the body. These systems are not separable except in thought and none of them can exist without the others.

A play must have a plot. This does not mean a conspiracy, the villain scheming against the hero, but an *orderly pattern* in which the events and situations are brought before the audience. The basis of the pattern is cause and effect. Every deed shown in the first part of the play is a cause of something that will happen later. Every deed shown later must be a consequence, a natural outcome of what was done earlier. There must be no twisting or wrenching to get a result that the causes shown would not naturally produce. Of course, there are plenty of shoddy dramas that are thus at fault. But the great dramatists will not introduce any result that does not seem a natural and even inevitable outgrowth of the causes portrayed.

After logical causation, the next test of a plot is its unity. Is it conceived as one action or movement complete in itself, picked out from the interwoven meshes of life? Is it represented as having a beginning or definite cause, an unconfused development, and a reasonably complete portrayal of the consequences? The material of a play is separated from the confused intermingled current of life only so far as an object in the foreground of a picture is separated from the background. A photograph of a landscape may look confused. There does not seem to be much distinction between foreground and background. But a painter makes a little more prominent the object he selects, and pushes the background a little farther back so that none of it will detract attention from the principal object. Yet the object is after all closely related to its background. It belongs to its environment. Indeed it grew out of it. We could not understand it without seeing something of the background. This fact suggests the importance of what is called local color. But this local color must be merely the background for the one action selected by the dramatist to be the focus of our attention.

There is not unity in a play merely because it presents the adventures of one person. The twelve tasks of Hercules have no real connection with each other, and should be presented in twelve different plays. Of course a dramatic action, with a beginning, development and conclusion, usually gathers around

one person. His plans, his difficulties, his destiny constitute the heart of the play, and the other persons are in the play because they help or hinder his enterprise. There may be many persons and many interests in the play, but unity of plot requires that all be ancillary to the main enterprise.

A play, if it is to attract and hold attention, must present many contrasts, in persons, in dress, in motives, in happenings. The events are not wholly unexpected; they are however a little different from what we were looking for. The play is often a succession or culmination of such occurrences, each adding to the tension until the final wave clears all. This usually exhibits a significant choice between two possible courses of action, heightened by a clear setting-forth of the probabilities involved in each. When this choice lies between some dominating loyalty and some overmastering desire or affection, we have tragedy. When there is conflict between self-blinded man and circumstances misunderstood by him, but quite clear to the audience, we have comedy.

The plot or plan must be so clear in the mind of the dramatist that nothing interferes with the evident on-going of the action.

Let us take the short passage, Luke 11: 5-13, and translate it into dramatic form, giving chief attention to the plot. The story is sketched in four verses; then in the five following verses the story is interpreted with practical applications.

As Jesus was unusually particular to enforce the

meaning and application of the story he told in this parable, it seems a pity to omit these verses from the dramatic translation. But how can these exhortations be naturally and artistically added? They are generally put into the mouth of some symbolic figure who appears in front of the curtain, or, if that is not convenient, at one edge of the scene. In this case an angel may be placed upon a pedestal at the extreme right of the stage, down front, that is, nearest the audience. Her dress may be of moonlight blue, her wings of deeper blue picked out with scarlet and gold. The angel may address the audience, but it preserves the picture better if she speaks to a learner or seeker for truth. This seeker may be dressed in white, light brown, or dark blue. As the curtain rises, he is in the center of the rather dark stage speaking to the angel. His questions must prepare us for the suggestions given in verses 9-13 as well as for the main teaching of the parable, namely, the necessity for perseverance in praying.

SEEKER. But you have not answered me, O shining one. Is it any use to pray?

ANGEL. Try it and see.

SEEKER. I have tried it but I don't see that it accomplished anything. I suppose it is wicked to say such a thing.

ANGEL. Did you really give praying a trial?

SEEKER. Yea, my lord. Did I not just say so?

ANGEL [*quietly insistent*]. A fair trial? . . . or

did you make a mere dab at it like a twittering bird pecking here and there? Have you tried praying persistently? in spite of shyness? or discouragement? or delayed answer? Have you truly tested it thoroughly? Have your prayers been only for yourself, or for the needs of others also?

[SEEKER *thinks but does not reply.*]

ANGEL. Come here and watch with me, that God may enlighten the eyes of your heart.

[SEEKER *crosses to ANGEL, and stands beside her or sits on the pedestal upon which the ANGEL stands. The lights now increase, and the whole stage becomes visible. Up right is seen the door to JOSIAS' small house. In the center of the left, the door to BARUCH's house.*]

How shall we construct the plot? First of all, what facts must be presented to the audience at the very beginning as a basis to build up the succeeding steps? What must they know in order to understand the gradually unfolding action? There are two men to be presented, one short of bread, the other with plenty. The latter has children with him in bed. It will be more vivid if we see them beforehand. There is no harm in giving the poorer man children also. The fact that one man is short of bread must somehow be brought to our attention. The most natural way is for some inmate of his house to reveal it, his wife, his old mother, his servant, his child. He is probably too poor to have a house-servant. If

the wife or mother is to reveal the need, it would be necessary to introduce another woman to chat with her. This would mean building up more characters, and thinking up enough for them to do to justify their existence in the play. Since we have decided to present the richer man's children, it will be easy to introduce a child from the poorer home playing with them, and let him reveal the shortage. Since farmers and peasants usually have supplies of food, the petitioner must live in a village, a worker that buys his grain. So we have made him a porter.

It is not absolutely necessary to present the visiting friend who arrives from a long journey, but the action will be more vivid and impressive if we see him.

As the situation is rather humorous, and the audience will be likely to laugh at the predicament of the man waiting outside the door, it is probably wise to recognize this, and let him use some Oriental exaggeration in his language.

[BARUCH, *the prosperous neighbor, is sitting or squatting beside his doorway. His two children, LYDIA and BENONI, are playing marbles with JUDAH, the son of the poorer neighbor JOSIAS.*]

BENONI. I hit it, I hit it. I get another turn.

LYDIA. No, you don't.

BENONI. I do too.

JUDAH. Yes, Lydia, we always get another turn if we hit.

[JOSIAS enters down left, carrying a large box on back, with porter's rack. He stops.]

JOSIAS. Peace to thy house, Baruch.

BARUCH. And to thee peace, Josias. Thou dost labor late.

JOSIAS. Yea. Hodesh, the sandal-maker, bought this box full of Moroccan leather from an Egyptian in the bazar. It took him a thousand years to fill it and get the lid fastened. I have carried it on the wings of the wind. But the sun was down ere he bade me depart. I will keep it under my own roof tonight, and bring it to Hodesh in the morning.

BARUCH. Yes, he will need it tonight.

JOSIAS [*to one of children*]. Come, Judah, the sun has beckoned thee to rest. Roll the wheels of thy chariot into the house of thy fathers, my son.

JUDAH. We thought you were lost, my father. The meal was all gone, and you left my mother no money to visit the market place. We had to make our supper of dates.

JOSIAS. God has filled my hand with silver this day. So tomorrow thou shalt have some wheaten cakes, if thou canst entice thy mother.

JUDAH [*laughing*]. Give me the money and I'll persuade mother.

[*He goes in. JOSIAS lowers box and ends it over into house.*]

BARUCH. Is not my purple dove weary?

LYDIA. Nay, my father, let me finish this game. I want to beat Benoni.

BARUCH. One game then, O star of the evening.

BENONI. I'm tired. It's time for bed. [*Goes in.*]

LYDIA. Oh! That isn't fair. Make him finish the game, my father. He is afraid he will be beaten by a girl. He would too. [*Calling after BENONI.*] You run-run-run-away!

BARUCH [*rising*]. You can play again on the morrow, daughter, when your little brother forgets his manhood.

[He follows her in, shuts and bars the door.]

[Amber lights dim slowly—go out—rise with moonlight blue, to indicate a lapse of several hours.]

NASHON OF ANTIOCH [*enters rather wearily, stands leaning on staff, sighs deeply*]. Well! here's the house at last. Yes, everything just the same! the old vine, and the twisted olive yonder. Grand-sire's old house. [*He goes up and knocks at door.*] Hey, Josias! Josias! [*Knocks again.*] Open to Nashon, thy father's friend.

JOSIAS [*within*]. What, Nashon of Antioch?

NASHON. Yea, Nashon of Antioch.

[Door opens and JOSIAS comes out. NASHON makes a bow.]

NASHON. Peace be unto this house.

JOSIAS. And to thee and thine, the peace of God. Enter, I pray thee, and I will bring water for

thy feet, and set bread before thee. [*He looks up startled, as he remembers.*] Bread? [*Clasps hands and shakes head.*] Bread! [*They go in.*]

[*After a few moments, door opens again and JOSIAS comes out. Looks back inside, closes door quietly, hesitates, then goes to BARUCH's door and knocks. Knocks again, louder and louder.*]

JOSIAS. Baruch, O Baruch! Baruch, awaken. Baruch, a friend has come to abide at my house, and I have nothing to set before him. [*He listens with ear to door.*] Snoring! How some men can sleep!

[*Looks around, finds a stone to knock on door, makes great noise. BARUCH appears at little window almost above door.*]

BARUCH. By the earthquake of Jericho! What is the matter! Who art thou that destroyest my door?

JOSIAS. 'Tis Josias, thy neighbor.

BARUCH. Josias! Art thou full of new wine? Thou art breaking down the wrong door. Thy dwelling is over yonder.

JOSIAS. Nay, Baruch, I pray thee listen.

BARUCH. On the morrow. Tonight I am asleep. [*Disappears.*]

JOSIAS. But hear me, I pray thee. . . . Gone! [*Waits, no answer, picks up stone and makes great noise on door. Waits, no answer. Knocks again.*]

BARUCH [*at window again*]. Josias, art thou full of wine?

JOSIAS. Nay, I am not full of anything. But a friend

has come from a long journey and I have no bread to set before him. Lend me I pray thee three rolls. Tomorrow I will repay thee.

BARUCH. My children are with me in bed. Trouble me no more. [*Disappears.*]

JOSIAS [*redoubles the noise on door*]. I pray thee hearken unto thy neighbor.

BARUCH [*again at window*]. Hearken! How can I do anything else? You would keep the deaf from slumber. You would almost disturb the dead.

JOSIAS. I pray thee, good neighbor, take pity on the nakedness of my table. Give me food that I may say "Welcome" to my friend. For who would live if he cannot feed his friend? Lend me a roll, a little roll of barley bread, or I am undone forever.

BARUCH [*a great sigh*]. If I find not the bread, thou wilt break in the walls of mine ears, and destroy my slumbers forever. My hair has grown white already with terror at thy battering. Desist! Desist! I will seek bread for thee.

JOSIAS. Only three rolls, neighbor! The Lord bless thee, and . . . He's really gone! Thank the Lord.

[*Door opens and BARUCH in tunic, without coat or robe, gives JOSIAS a little wooden platter with some flat loaves on it.*]

BARUCH. Behold, here is bread with the blessing of God. May it fill thy friend with the gladness of welcome.

JOSIAS. Jehovah bless the largeness of thy heart. May he fill thee bounteously. May thy children grow fat with milk and honey, and may wafers and oil roll under thy tongue. [**BARUCH** *closes door. As JOSIAS closes own door he says,*] May thy sleep be sweet, my bounteous neighbor. Thou hast set my heart at rest.

[**SEEKER** *rises from pedestal, looks after JOSIAS, goes down right center.*]

ANGEL. I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [**SEEKER** *nods assent.*] Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. [**SEEKER** *laughingly nods assent.*] If a son asks his father for a loaf will he give him a stone? If he asks a fish will he give him a serpent? If he asks an egg will he give him a scorpion? If selfish and impatient men give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask him? to them that persistently ask him?

SLOW CURTAIN

In dramatizing this simple narrative, there is of course nothing complex: no twining together of different strands. It is a mere natural progress of simple, commonplace events. The causes are not hid-

den, and the results are immediate and obvious. Everything culminates in the decision of the neighbor to lend the loaves of bread.

When we turn to a more complex narrative like that contained in the book of Amos for example, we find it much more difficult. The events, instead of extending over a few hours, cover many years. In the record more space is given to his public addresses than to the narrative of events. Most of these speeches will have to be omitted, because they would hinder the progress of the action, which must be kept moving freely onward at any cost. Indeed all speeches, however important in themselves, must be omitted unless they assist, in some way, the progress of the action.

The group must read and re-read the book of Amos until out of the flood of words there emerge men; men moving about, crowds of men, eager, careless, angry men, frightened men, men busy with all the life of their time. They will then begin to perceive what Amos saw the folk doing and the effect it had upon him. After that they will gradually see the results of his burning words upon various groups of listeners—the priests, the rich, the patrioteers, the court satellites, the flippant women, the influential self-satisfied citizens.

As soon as the incidents in their real setting become clear in the minds of the class, as soon, that is, as Amos and his contemporaries become natural and familiar figures, the group may begin to act out

the story. They will keep in mind the most probable sequence of time, and use as much of the recorded speeches as seems to fit the action. This will result, perhaps, in something like the following:

ACTING THE INCIDENT

AMOS. Hearken! hearken!—the whisper of God!

For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four I will not turn it away.

Because they bruised the land of Gilead with cruel threshing-sleds.

But I will send a fire into the house of their king,

And it shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.

And God will break down the gate of Damascus, and destroy the inhabitants.

And the king and the people shall go into captivity—yonder.

[*Considerable excitement among the audience.*]

VARIOUS CITIZENS. Good!

Who is the old hump?

He must be one of those prophets from the desert.

Well, he has hit it all right this time.

Hush! he's . . .

AMOS. For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four, I will not turn it away.

Because they captured a whole district, to sell them as slaves to Edom. . . .

CITIZENS. Gaza! Good for Gaza!

Give it to the Philistines!

Smite them again!

Flog them, pelt them, flay the Philistines.

AMOS. And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith God, Jehovah.

CITIZENS. O Shallum, come, come quick.

Jorah, here's a fellow just jamming the Philistines.

Come on, Shammah, you'll miss the fun.

He's got the giant-stroke, smites them hip and thigh.

AMOS. For three transgressions of Tyre, yea, for four, I will not turn it away.

Because they sold to the slave-buyers of Edom a whole village of their own kinsmen.

But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre and it shall devour her palaces.

CITIZENS [*murmur of assent, with chuckling and laughing*].

AMOS. For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four. . . .

CITIZENS. Edom! Edom!

Come, Darkon, let's hear what he says about Edom.

Good enough for Edom.

Edom's getting it now—Yah! Edom!

AMOS. Because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all compassion,

Their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together.

CITIZENS. Their turn now. Edom in slavery.

Pay them back. Smite them again.

AMOS. For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four I will not turn it away.

[Voices interrupt, but a good deal of the following can be heard.]

But I will send a fire upon Moab

And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth.

And Moab shall die with tumult [*uproar*], with shouting [*more uproar*] and with battle trumpets [*greater uproar*].

Hearken, hearken, to the roar of Jehovah.

VOICES. Who is he after now?

He's been all around.

Hush, let the man talk, can't ye?

[There is a general hush. Everybody leans forward in eager expectancy, eyes smiling, mouths open. He stabs into them like the thrust of a spear.]

AMOS. For three transgressions of Israel.

[They are astonished, they draw in their breath, in sudden recoil, and AMOS hastens with the attack, blow on blow.]

AMOS. Because they have sold the righteous for money.

And the needy for a pair of shoes.

So greedy for real estate that they pant after the

handful of dirt on the head of the poor mourner.

Yet I destroyed the wicked Amorites to make room for you!

I rescued you from the land of Egypt by Moses.

I raised up your sons for leaders, and you have made them—wine-guzzlers.

Behold, I will crush you, as a cart smothers that is full of sheaves.

Flight shall not save the swift,

Neither shall the strong escape.

The bowman and the champion shall creep away naked in that terrible day.

[Crowd with sullen murmurs melts away, AMOS hurling these sentences after them. Slow curtain, AMOS and a few left.]

SCENE II

[Same place. AMOS seated on rocks right rear. Half a dozen men seated on the ground around him; one or two standing on the outskirts.]

FIRST CITIZEN. But we are God's chosen people. He will not allow us to be destroyed.

AMOS *[rising]*. Hear this word, that God hath spoken against you: "Against the family I rescued out of the land of Egypt. With you only have I been intimate among the families of the earth. Therefore, I will bring down upon you all your iniquities."

SECOND CITIZEN. You are no prophet. What sign have you that this is God's message?

AMOS. It is just plain good sense. Will a lion roar if he is not leaping on his prey? Do you see a bird fall and flutter upon the earth if there is no snare there? Can you not use your eyes and your sense? The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken; can you not understand? I see [*shows by his gesture that it is a vision of the future*] it coming—I see it coming upon Israel, I see your violence to the very core. Oh, why do you not use good sense? You are storing up violence and explosion, when you store up robbery, and oppression of the poor. God is whispering [*in a loud whispered tone*] an adversary around the land; he shall bring down thy forts and plunder thy palaces.

SECOND OR THIRD CITIZEN. Well, if an adversary should come against God's chosen people, I guess the Lord would rescue us.

AMOS [*with keen scorn*]. Yes, he would! As the shepherd rescues from the lion two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so shall God rescue the children of Israel—that loll on the silken cushions of a couch. He will smite your luxury; and your winter houses and your summer houses and your houses of ivory shall perish, saith Jehovah.

[*Enter a number of elegantly dressed women left front. They are gallantly greeted and stay chatting superciliously.*]

CITIZEN [*to Amos*]. You don't have such beautiful women as that in the desert, eh? How elegant and charming is the daintiness of womanhood!

AMOS. Womanhood? Hear this word, ye cattle of Bashan! Daintiness! Clumsier than stampeding cows, trampling upon the poor, crushing the needy, not listening to the sorrowful but calling noisily unto their lords, "More wine and let us drink." Beautiful Womanhood! The Lord God hath sworn by his Holiness that they shall drag you away captive with hooks through those scornful lips. Begone! The day will come when you shall drag your dainty feet through the broken walls of the city.

[*Women go out left front scared.*]

ISRAELITE. Why dost thou rail against the Lord's anointed people, who come from far and worship faithfully?

AMOS. The more you worship, the more you transgress. You are so stupefied with the smoke of your incense and the blare of your priestly trumpets that you never hear the voice of God. He stands tapping your shoulder [*Amos taps shoulder of man near him*] and you never turn to listen. Harken to the voice of Jehovah. "I have given you cleanness of teeth, and want of bread, *yet ye have not returned unto me,*" saith Jehovah, "I have withholden the rain from you, so that two or three villages clamored at another's gate for a little water, *yet ye have not returned unto me,*"

saith Jehovah. "I have smitten your gardens and vineyards with blasting and mildew; and the palmer-worm hath devoured your figs and olives; *yet ye have not returned unto me,*" saith Jehovah. "I have sent among you the deadly pestilence, and your young men have fallen by the invader's sword; *yet ye have not returned unto me,*" saith Jehovah. "I have shaken you with the earthquake, *yet ye have not returned unto me,*" saith Jehovah. "In spite of all your high professing, your sacrifices and worshippings, you do not know God. But you shall know him. Therefore, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

ONE OF AMOS' FRIENDS. Sh, they hate him that reproveth them; they will harm you if you speak too honestly.

AMOS. "Ye, who turn justice to wormwood and tear down righteousness, tramp not to Beth-el, nor to Gilgal, nor to Beersheba, but seek God and ye shall live. For I know how mighty are your sins, ye afflict the just, ye take a bribe, ye turn aside the needy, ye trample upon the poor. Ye have built houses of hewn stone— *But ye shall not dwell in them;* Ye have planted pleasant vineyards— *But ye shall not drink the wine thereof.* In your vineyards shall be wailing, for *I* will pass through the midst of thee," saith your God.

ISRAELITE. We are expecting the great Day of the Lord when the righteousness of Jehovah shall triumph over his enemies.

AMOS. His enemies! and what are you? He hates your feasts. He hates your offerings, and your anthems. Hence with your worship, your solemn assemblies—but let Justice roll down like a river, and righteousness like an everflowing stream! [*Buries head in hands, sways with emotion.*]

A RICHLY DRESSED ISRAELITE. I'm thankful I'm not a pessimist always knocking things. [*Walks away with head in air.*]

AMOS [*his indignation breaking out again*]. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, the "prominent men" that wave off the evil day, but by their luxury and oppression bring on violence. They lie upon beds of ivory; they eat the tender lambs and drink wine by bucketfuls. They are fastidious about their ointments, but careless about their tenants. They are dainty with cosmetics, but brutal with their workmen. Therefore these "leaders of society" shall lead the procession of the captives. [*Hearers recoil in awe and horror.*] For hearken! God announces: "I will raise up against you a nation that shall afflict you from the entrance of Hamath. [*At the extreme north.*] Unto the brook of Arabah." [*At the extreme south.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III

[*AMOS sitting in same place with chin in hand, elbow on knee, far-off look in his eyes. Serious, sym-*

pathetic, men steal in silently one by one, and by twos, and seat selves around Amos. They must share his emotion through all this.]

AMOS [*chanting*]. The Virgin of Israel is fallen, no more to rise. She is smitten down upon her land, none to lift her up.

ONE. O Master, is there no hope for us? Must our land be ravaged by the Assyrians? Has God determined to destroy us?

AMOS. Nay, God is yearning to save us. He crieth in all the broad highways, "Seek ye me and ye shall live." But they turn away from justice, and every man overreacheth his brother.

ANOTHER. They have enriched the worship of the Lord Jehovah, and attracted great congregations. The leaders of the nation bow before his altar.

AMOS. To what purpose? Are they not selfish, cruel, greedy? Impatient for the Sabbath to end, that they may sell food? making the measure small, putting refuse in the wheat, and weighing the money with balances that cheat? They crowd the poor, heedless of the needy. They have made self-indulgence the fashion, aye, lifted it into a creed.

[There is silence. All gradually droop.]

AMOS [*raising his head*]. I cried unto Jehovah again and yet again, "How can Israel stand against thy wrath?" And he saved us from the locusts, and saved us from the drought. But he showed me in a vision a bowing wall, and held a plumbline to

it. The Lord holds a plumbline in the midst of Israel. He will not pass by their iniquities any more. The high places shall be desolate, the sanctuaries laid waste. [*Amos rises.*] If they do not repent and deal justly, every man with his neighbor, their feasts shall be turned into mourning, and all their songs into lamentation, they shall go into captivity and the sword shall slay them. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Then whatever happens, Jehovah the God of hosts will be with you, as ye say. [*Chants.*] The Virgin of Israel is fallen; no more to rise. She is smitten down upon her land; none to raise her up.

ANOTHER. It may be that Jehovah the God of hosts will be gracious unto a remnant of his people.

AMOS [*chants*]. Let justice sweep down like a river,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.

CURTAIN

This gives in order what presumably happened, and gives it in dramatic form. It presents the events as if occurring before our eyes. But it is not a play. It is merely a series of connected scenes.

We have already gathered that a play is a single action or event, with its beginning, or causes, its development, and its fruitage. It is so presented as to give us a sense of completeness.

In these scenes our attention has been focused not upon Amos, not upon the King, not upon any in-

dividual, but rather upon the nation. We are shown the blindness, selfishness and stupid sinfulness of the people as a whole. This leads them to commit folly. But we do not see that this folly necessarily brings the Assyrian invasion upon them. That is a punishment inflicted by God, who might have chosen some other form of punishment. There was nothing in the nation's conduct which would inevitably bring about the Assyrian invasion. In a play the outcome must be inextricably involved in the action, inherently latent in it. As it develops before us, we see that no other result could be possible.

It is true that if we are familiar with the broad sweep of world history, we know that selfish, blind luxury and violence has generally led to destruction by some more vigorous barbarians. But that is rather vague, and it is not given us in these scenes. A play with a nation as hero is too ambitious for us to attempt. Better to center a play around one person! Is there sufficient dramatic material to make a play about Amos? Can we make him the center without reducing the majestic sweep of the prophetic book to a petty size? That is the great danger. It will be difficult to succeed. Perhaps we cannot put into the background and setting enough suggestion of the on-going political, religious, and social forces to give a short play with deep enough significance. But that is what we must attempt. In compressing everything into a single scene, the long years of waiting between the prophet's warning and the coming of

the Assyrian invaders must be condensed into a few hours, to enable us to see the causes and the results in the same scene. Such foreshortening need not interfere with historic values.

[The scene is the space just inside the city wall. In the center at the rear is a great gate, with a heavy pillar at each side. To the right of the gate is a stone platform 16 or 24 inches high. Upon it back against the wall is a flat stone seat upon which the judges sit. On the left side of the gate (as far to the left as the size of stage will permit) is a stone dungeon. It extends four or five feet forward from the wall with a door facing audience. There is an opening with bars in the upper part of the door.]

As the curtain rises two white-bearded JUDGES in robes and turbans are seen seated on the platform. At the left corner of the platform stands ELEAZER in rich garments. He is forty or fifty years of age, wears full beard not yet touched with gray. He is counting out silver coins from a leather bag-purse and carefully making even two piles upon the corner of the platform. AMOS, a roughly dressed shepherd, with dark skin and short beard, stands down left not missing much of what is going on. A few men and women come through the city gate. TALMON and JEDUTHUN cross center and look into prison, then go right to observe the trial. MANOAH stops just within the gate and joins

ELEAZER; *another, with a bundle of fagots or a heavy sack of grain on his left shoulder, stops at the prison door to speak to the prisoner before going out left. He sets down his load and remains. An OFFICER at the right corner of the JUDGES' platform is receiving orders. He bows to them, then crosses to the prison and orders the burden-carrier away. Then with a large key hanging to his girdle he unlocks the door.]*

OFFICER [*to the prisoner inside*]. Come along. The judges are ready for you now.

[**ELEAZER**, *hearing his harsh summons, turns quickly, drops a coin which rolls away. He recovers it, and gives the two piles of silver to the JUDGES, going to right corner of platform. The JUDGES tuck the money in their girdles, just as the officer brings GEBER to the left corner. GEBER is timid, nervous, barefooted, dressed only in a knee-length blue or brown tunic, and head-cloth.*]

FIRST JUDGE. Is this Geber, son of Harran?

GEBER. Thou speakest truly, O father of wisdom.

FIRST JUDGE. Why hast thou not paid Eleazer the money thou owest him?

GEBER. I have paid all . . . I thought I had . . . he . . . he said we were even. . . .

SECOND JUDGE [*sharply*]. What? Wouldst thou bear false witness against Eleazer?

FIRST JUDGE. Where is your account?

GEBER. Thy servant cannot read or write, O my father. I scratch the bushels on the door-post . . . and . . .

ELEAZER. Then bring the door-post to the judge.

JUDGES [*with an unpleasant laugh*]. Ha-ha-ha.

GEBER. Eleazer measured the barley himself, and put his share in sacks and took it away. He left me mine on the threshing floor.

SECOND JUDGE. Dost thou accuse an elder of the people?

FIRST JUDGE. Thou shalt pay twenty shekels to Eleazer.

GEBER. O my father, I have only three shekels, and my children cry for bread.

FIRST JUDGE. Only three shekels? Then thou shalt be a bond-servant to Eleazer until the feast of Pentecost.

GEBER [*falls on knees*]. O my father [*touches head to floor*], judges of Israel [*head to floor*], who will gather my olives and tread my grapes? My children are small. If thy servant is not there, they will die.

SECOND JUDGE [*with an unmirthful laugh*]. Well, how else is Eleazer to get his money?

AMOS [*down left, coming a step or two nearer*]. O ye judges of Israel, hath not Eleazer already had his full share of the barley?

FIRST JUDGE [*surveying AMOS and his coarse garments with scorn*]. Who art thou? Who madest thee a judge over this people?

AMOS. Do not our sacred writings say: Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul? Shall the friend of the poor separate himself from him in the day of his calamity?

FIRST JUDGE [*rising*]. He shall be bond-servant to Eleazer.

SECOND JUDGE [*rising*]. Eleazer, take him into thine own hand.

[*They start haughtily to go out left.*]

AMOS [*center, goes right, lays hand on GEBER's shoulder; turns, shaking fist at retreating judges*]. Woe to them that trample upon the poor; that turn aside justice for a bribe.

[*JUDGES turn angrily; one takes a step towards AMOS, but thinks better of it, and goes out left.*]

AMOS. Woe to the man that stores up in his palace violence and robbery. [*ELEAZER starts, looks around at AMOS and hastens after JUDGES.*] Advertise, advertise to the vultures of Ashdod and Egypt. Come to the mountains of Samaria. Behold Israel has become a carcase,—corruption to the very core!

TALMON. Hush, hush! [*Looking around apprehensively.*] That is dangerous. One may not speak against the notable men.

JEDUTHUN. They hate the man that rebukes injustice. The judges all judge for a reward.

TALMON. Yea, they hate him that speaketh about uprightness. It is dangerous.

AMOS. Dangerous? But we *must* speak. The nation is doomed if justice be not established in the gate.

TALMON. Yes, yes. But not just now. This is a bad time. Therefore the man that is prudent will keep silence . . . until . . . until a better time.

JEDUTHUN. We are as the dust of the earth. There is no power in us.

AMOS. No power. [*In tone of despair.*] Then call the sons of the soil to a great mourning—lamentation and wailing in all vineyards.

[*The throbbing tum-tum of a band of religious mendicants is heard off stage. It increases till AMOS cannot be heard, and they burst through the gate upon the stage, whirling in an irregular dance, chanting as they dance. They chant.*]

The altar of Beth-el is waiting your offerings.

The high place of Gilga is ready for sacrifice.

Your offerings! for sacrifice!

FIRST NAZARITE [*passes tambourine for money, chants*]. Something for religion?

SECOND NAZARITE [*passes tambourine, chants*]. For Gilgal.

FIRST NAZARITE [*chants*]. For Beth-el.

SECOND NAZARITE. For the sons of the Prophets.

[THIRD NAZARITE, *teetering still, snatches veil from a woman's face and laughs.* FIRST NAZARITE *pulls up her skirt and laughs.*]

AMOS. Religion? Accurséd! Sons of the prophets? Filthy-minded guzzlers!

[SECOND NAZARITE *snatches turban from GEBER, spins it on finger; they laugh.* THIRD NAZARITE *attempts to snatch AMOS' head-cloth.* AMOS *with back of his hand swings him a tremendous slap on face and sends him staggering to center into the arms of first NAZARITE.*]

AMOS. Half drunken! You teach the Nazarites to drink wine.

FIRST NAZARITE. We have repaired the high places and built up altars.

AMOS. God demands righteousness, not ritual. He hates such worshipping. You cannot coax Him with offerings. Your altars He will smite to the ground. What to Him is the smoke of your sacrifices? Let justice roll down like a river and righteousness like a mighty stream. There is no religion in Beth-el, no salvation in Gilgal.

SECOND NAZARITE. He speaks against the Holy Place of Jehovah our God.

AMOS. Your high places shall be desolate; the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. For God will raise up against you a terrible nation, that shall trample you from Hamath of Lebanon, to the brook of the Arabah.

JEDUTHUN. O herdsman, your words are like a sharp sword.

AMOS. If you do not repent and deal justly every man with his brother, your iniquities shall rise up like a river, and sweep you away. Ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in

them. Ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof.

MANOAH. Don't believe him. He speaks in the bitterness of his heart.

AMOS. Open your eyes and see. Ye blind! blind! Will a wise man drive horses upon the cliff? Will he plow the sea with oxen? But you turn justice into gall, and then pride yourselves in your wisdom.

MANOAH. Jehovah has blessed these men with great prosperity.

AMOS. There shall not one of them escape. Though they hide in the thickets of Carmel, Jehovah will find them. Though they plunge to the bottom of the sea, he will hunt them out with the sea-serpent. Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall his hand take them. Though they climb up to heaven, thence shall he drag them down.

TALMON. Amos, it is not wise to oppose the rich and powerful. Their hearts are set upon their desires, and if you speak against them, they will hate you.

JEDUTHUN. If you speak against their religion, they will be bitter against you.

TALMON. You will be interfering with the priests' revenue, and they will pursue you with the sword. A priest's anger tears perpetually.

AMOS. But the nation will perish if we do not stop such wickedness. Some one must stand. [*He considers, decides, steps up on rock. He gives long low sheep call. Several people come in.* JUDGES

drop in on outskirts later, also the NAZARITES; one goes out rapidly and brings AMAZIAH.] Hearken! Hearken to the voice of God. For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, God will not turn . . . this away. Because they bruised the land of Gilead as with cruel threshing-sleds. But he will send a fire into the house of their king, and it shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. Yea, God will break down the great gate of Damascus and destroy the inhabitants. The King and the people shall be driven into captivity . . . yonder.

[Considerable excitement among hearers. Out of the murmur we hear.]

VOICES. Good! Good enough for Damascus!

Who is the old hump?

Must be one of those prophets from the desert.

Well, he suits me, this time.

Hush, he's. . . .

AMOS. Hearken! hearken to the voice of God! "For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four, I will not turn . . . this away. Because they captured a whole district to sell them as slaves to Edom. . . ."

VOICES. Gaza! good for Gaza!

Give it to the Philistines.

Smite them again.

Flog them, pelt them, flay the Philistines.

AMOS. ". . . and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," saith God, Jehovah.

[*Hearers look pleased, some clap, leap, shout, some run to left and call others.*]

VOICES. O Shallum, come, come quick.

Jorah, here's a fellow just jamming the Philistines.

Come on, Shammah, you'll miss the fun.

He's got the giant-stroke, smites them hip and thigh.

AMOS. Hearken! hearken to the voice of God: "For three transgressions of Tyre, yea, for four, I will not turn . . . this away. Because they sold to the slave-buyers of Edom a whole village of their own kinsmen. But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her palaces." [*Murmurs of assent, chuckling, enthusiasm drown last line or two.*] Hearken! hearken to the whisper of God: "For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn . . . this away."

VOICES. Edom! Edom!

He's getting all of them.

Come, Darkon, let's hear what he says about Edom.

Edom's getting it now. Yah! Edom!

AMOS. Because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all compassion. Their King shall go into captivity, he and his princes together.

VOICES. Their turn now!

Edom in slavery!

Pay them back! Smite them again!

AMOS. Hearken! hearken to the whisper of Jehovah:

“For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four I will not turn . . . this away. [*Voices interrupt but most of the following can be heard.*] But I will send a fire upon Moab, and devour the palaces of Kerioth. [*Uproar.*] And Moab shall die with tumult [*uproar*], with shouting [*more uproar*] and with battle trumpets.” [*Wild hilarious uproar.*] Hearken! hearken to the roar of Jehovah.

VOICES. Who is he after now?

He’s been all around.

Hush. Let the man talk, can’t you?

[*There is a general hush. Everybody leaning forward in eager expectancy, eyes smiling, mouths open, he stabs it into them like the thrust of a spear.*]

AMOS. For three transgressions of . . . Israel, yea, for four God will not turn . . . this back.

[*In the astonished recoil, they draw in their breath with a great grasp and Amos hastens on.*]

“Because they have sold the righteous for money, and the needy for a pair of shoes. They corrupt the judges against the weak. So greedy for real estate that they reach after the handful of dirt on the mourner’s head. Yet I destroyed the wicked Amorites to make room for you! I rescued you from Egypt by Moses! I raised up your sons for leaders, and you have made them . . . wine-guzzlers! Behold the eyes of Jehovah are upon the

sinful kingdom. And he will *destroy it* from off the face of the earth. Flight shall not save the swift. Neither shall the proud horseman escape. The bowman and the champion shall creep away stripped in that terrible day."

AMAZIAH [*steps forward*]. Here, you. Go off to Judah and play the prophet there. We want none of your prophetizing here.

AMOS [*with gesture of protest*]. I am no prophet! I am a herdsman. But God, Jehovah, took me from watching the flock, and said, "Go warn my people Israel."

AMAZIAH. Speak not against the government. This is the King's shrine. [*To FIRST NAZARITE.*] Hasten to Samaria, and tell the King that Amos is stirring up treason. [*Exit FIRST NAZARITE.*] But the fool speaketh according to his folly.

AMOS. Folly! I speak by the word of Jehovah. Thou speakest folly. Thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword. And thou shalt be led away captive, to die in a strange land.

AMAZIAH. Why, we are God's chosen people.

AMOS. Yea. His chosen people. Therefore, because you know, he will hold you accountable for all your iniquities. [*Loud whisper.*] An adversary shall surround you on every side. He shall tear down your forts and plunder your palaces.

FIRST JUDGE. If the invader did come, God would rescue us.

AMOS. Yea! A great rescue! As a shepherd rescues

from the lion two shin-bones and a piece of an ear, so shall the silken tenderlings of Samaria be rescued. Woe to them that are at ease! You lie upon beds of ivory. You can eat only the tender lambs out of the flock. You drink wine by pailfuls, and adorn yourselves with perfumed ointments. But you give no heed to the affliction of the people. Therefore these "first families" shall march first into captivity.

*[Enter several elegantly dressed women.**

They are greeted gallantly.]

CITIZEN *[to Amos]*. Behold the lilies of Beth-el. You do not have such refined and dainty women in the desert.

ANOTHER. The daughters of Beth-el build its walls by their beauty.

[Women acknowledge this flattery with smiles, etc.]

AMOS. Beauty! Hear God's word! Cattle of Bashan! Dainty? clumsier than stampeding cattle. Trampling upon the poor, crushing the needy. Women should sympathize with the sorrowing, but you clamor to your lords: "More wine to drink." The Lord God hath sworn by his Holiness that the Assyrians shall drag you away captive with hooks,—hooks through those scornful lips. Begone! The day will come when they shall drag your dainty feet through the broken walls of the city.

* Isaiah 3: 16-23.

[Everybody hushed and frightened. A NAZARITE more brazen recovers.]

SECOND NAZARITE. Why dost thou rail against God's people? They worship faithfully with lavish offerings.

AMOS. The more you worship the more you transgress! Impatient for the Sabbath to end that you may make money. You make the measure small. You put in the refuse of the wheat. You weigh the money with a false balance. You are so stupefied with the smoke of your incense that you never notice what God *[taps shoulder of man near him]* is trying to say to you. *[Every one looks at him incredulous. He puts hand to ear and listens.]* Sh! "I have given you cleanness of teeth and want of bread, yet have ye not returned unto me," saith Jehovah. "I have withholden the rain so that two or three villages clamored at another's gate for a little water, yet have ye not returned unto me," saith Jehovah. "I have smitten your gardens and vineyards with the palmer-worm, yet have ye not returned unto me," saith Jehovah. "I have destroyed your young men with sword and pestilence, yet have ye not returned unto me," saith Jehovah. "I have overthrown your cities by the earthquake, yet have ye not returned unto me," saith Jehovah. In spite of your high professing you do not know God. But you shall suddenly know him. Will a lion roar in the forest unless he leaps on his prey? Jehovah roars from Zion. Who will not fear?

Seek good and not evil, O children of Israel, that ye may live. It may be that Jehovah the God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant that the adversary leaves behind.

[Amos sits disconsolate on rock, seeing afar off the terrible invasion. A long pause. Everybody hushed in awe at his words.]

SEVERAL *[running in]*. The Assyrians are marching upon us! They have burned Dothan and Megiddo. Flee, flee to the mountains, across the Jordan.

[FIRST NAZARITE returns with a CAPTAIN.]

CAPTAIN. Which is Amos? Where is Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa?

SEVERAL *[pointing]*. There he is. Yonder he sits. What are you going to do to him?

CAPTAIN. Put him in the dungeon till the judges sentence him.

VOICES. What are they arresting him for?

CAPTAIN. For conspiring against King Jeroboam, and the King's sanctuary.

AMOS *[rises, chants in dirge rhythm, chanted monotone, then short falling cadences]*.

The Virgin of Israel is fallen;

No more to rise.

She lies desolate upon her land;

None to lift her up.

[CAPTAIN arrests AMOS, unlocks prison door and locks it after AMOS goes in. Noise off-gate. People hastening both ways carrying

bundles, children, jars, etc. CAPTAIN sends them out left. MESSENGER comes to gate and beckons CAPTAIN.]

MESSENGER. Haste thee, haste, captain. The Assyrians are upon us. The King summons all the men of war to the North Gate. [CAPTAIN goes out through gate.]

[Murmuring noise of fugitives diminishes off left. Up roar off-gate increases, then dies away.]

CITIZEN. O shepherd, is there no hope for us? Must we be ravaged by the Assyrians? Is Jehovah set to destroy us?

AMOS. Nay, God crieth in all the broad highways: "Seek not Beth-el but seek ye me and ye shall live." But they turn away from justice, and every man overreacheth his brother. They have made self-indulgence their religion. Israel is a leaning wall. Jehovah hath showed me his plumbline. He will not pass by their iniquities any more.

[Last people arise and leave discouraged.]

AMOS [*with long pauses*]. "The songs of the palace shall be wailings in that day," saith the Lord Jehovah. The great house smitten into ruins, and the little house into splinters! . . . Dead bodies in heaps! . . . Everywhere silence!

WOMAN [*enters from left, comes timidly to gate, looks out, shrinks back, shudders, looks again*]. Lost, lost! The day of the Lord is darkness and no light. [*Goes out left, wringing hands hopeless, stops to listen to Amos, then goes out.*]

AMOS. Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live. Then whatever happens Jehovah will be with you, forever.

[*Silence. Wounded man, head tied with bloody cloth, staggers in gate, calls feebly outside, "Help! . . . If I can only get in." Enters.*]

SOLDIER. Where . . . ? All . . . gone? [*Staggers along.*] I only am escaped alone to tell. . . . [*Falls, not prone, up on hands.*] Oh, water . . .

AMOS. Here is water. [*Shows red stone flask; soldier creeps to door, rattles chain and padlock, beats feebly on door, slumps.*]

SOLDIER. You are locked in. There's no one to let you out.

AMOS. Wait! I'll let it down to you. [*He ties girdle to it, puts it through bars and lowers it.*]

SOLDIER. They are all dead. There is no one to bring you water . . . or food.

AMOS. Think not of me. Drink.

[*Man drinks, sways, spills it, falls dead.*]

O house of Israel! Wailing shall be in all the highways.

O Lord Jehovah, forgive, I beseech thee. How shall Israel stand against thy chastising?

SLOW CURTAIN

CHAPTER FIVE

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS—CHARACTER

While plot is the primary and fundamental feature of a drama, character is more interesting and more significant. The plot shows us what happens to the chief personage. The character shows us how he responds to these happenings. The depth of our interest is measured far more by the character of this personage, than by the incidents that happen to him.

Let us examine the story of Naaman (II Kings, chapter 5) for illustration of these statements. Are we more interested in what happens to the persons, to the little captive maid, to Naaman's wife, or to Naaman, than in these people themselves? Are we content to skip all the story except the ending? If so, the story cannot be translated into drama until the characters are developed, and become more interesting in themselves.

It is a story with remarkable dramatic values. There is the outline sketch of a powerful general, who listens to the suggestion of a slave child (a captive girl whose kind heart helps the man whose sol-

diers had torn her from home); a heart-fluttered king with no spiritual resources; a man of vision, a prophet, simple, majestic, fearless, unmoved by the things whose possession agitates most men. In the incident there are discernible several movements or waves of climax, and several forces of contrast. We see Naaman ambitious and successful in getting riches, power, and applause, but all his success is cancelled; he is a leper. We see the priests of Rimmon trying to cure him—and failing. The unconquered King, Ben-Hadad, attempts it and fails. Then the most helpless creature, a little captive maid, succeeds because she knows God.

Again we see the King offer a stupendous sacrifice of oxen to help Naaman—in vain. Naaman brings a great present to Elisha—in vain. Elisha does not take it. Naaman expects a striking and impressive ceremony with the national prophet officiating. Elisha is not even present; an errand boy brings a simple message to go to the river Jordan and bathe.

The story as given is a mere outline. But it is firmly sketched, and offers a fine opportunity to exercise the imagination in consistent character portrayal.

If the little maid was snatched from her home in one of Naaman's raids why should she feel so kindly towards him, and be concerned to cure his leprosy? What sort of man was Naaman? What effect did leprosy have upon his career? his activities? his

friendships? his character? Such questions must be worked out before the story can be transferred to the stage.

In every situation there are four aspects to consider:

(1) The world we live in is a moral universe, under the rule of a reasonable but unescapable Power or Providence.

(2) A man is influenced by heredity, by his inheritance of possessions, of tasks, of personal tendencies.

(3) He is further influenced by his surroundings, the limitations or opportunities of the environment in which he finds himself, his relations with other people, and the interplay of their motives and actions which are beyond his control.

(4) Most determinate of all, however, are his own decisions in the midst of these circumstances, and the clear results of these decisions.

The drama must show no autocratic interference of Fate or Providence, no over-emphasis upon the compulsion of the man's environment, no insistence upon the chains of heredity. Nothing must obscure the visible working of his own will, and the clear recognition that the dominant factor in the interplay of cause and effect is the man's own decision. This is to say that the *plot* is ultimately dominated by the *character* of the chief personage. If we place a person with certain traits of character in a well-defined environment, the way this environment affects

him, and what he does in response to it, will constitute the play.

If an author with an excessive sense of plot or pattern writes a story, it may arouse our curiosity and hold our attention because of mystery, or dangerous adventures. We are interested in detective stories, and tales of exploration even if the persons engaged therein do not attract us. In such stories each reader instinctively puts himself into the central place. A play deals rather with a crisis than with gradual development. Therefore this exaggerated interest in plot is seldom found in drama. It is true that what a man says is never so interesting as what he does, but our interest is not so much in the mere deed as in the man doing it. Why does he do it? What are his motives? How does he do it? What are his manners, his disposition, his traits of character?—How is he himself influenced by the doing of it? and what effect does it have upon others?

For this reason it is important to arrange the situation, to construct the plot, so that the attention of the audience will be focussed upon the man, rather than upon his circumstances. Additional persons must be introduced to throw light upon him and his actions. These persons must be kept subordinate, because they are not introduced for their own sake, but to help develop or reveal the central character.

In constructing a situation to reveal character, certain obvious principles need to be kept in mind.

Everything that is done or said must be *interest-*

ing. So far as possible it should be interesting in itself, and not merely because it leads to something else. If a young woman brings in a bunch of flowers to put into a vase, we should be interested in her, in the lines of her dress, in the rhythmic sweep of her walk, in the flowers themselves, in the way she arranges them in the vase, in her evident pleasure in the task, and in the way she expresses that pleasure. Perhaps she hums or sings, her face lights up with a smile, or she inhales the fragrance with evident delight, or she gives deft little touches to this flower and that, or she steps back and tilts her head to one side with evident and delightful appreciation. Yet it is only too possible to bring in a bunch of flowers as if they were as uninteresting as a box of matches.

For grown-ups interest does not necessarily involve superlatives, however much children are supposed to be interested in ferocious giants and invincible giant-killers. Adults prefer a setting whose main elements are familiar, but with some new element which gives freshness to the situation. This calls forth slightly different conduct, and reveals new and unsuspected aspects of character, perhaps an unusual combination of qualities in the hero or heroine. A reckless daredevil shows an unexpected gentleness with children. A gracious person, who steadies and strengthens people, is secretly suffering the attack of a cruel Fate. A man with everything heart could wish is unhappy from some disappointment.

Another stripped of everything has a surprising source of joy, perhaps only a tamed squirrel, which completely wins our sympathetic interest and admiration.

The principal method that the drama everywhere employs is the exhibiting of *contrasts*. This method is of great use in setting forth character. Of course the contrasts must not be so sharp or striking as to destroy the unity and harmony of the scene. But within these limits, the more contrasts and the more sharply defined, the more clear and distinct will the characters be etched upon the minds of the audience.

To this end it is well to have an element of surprise, a touch of the unexpected in the character of the chief person. A lifelike portrait usually reveals such hitherto hidden traits. But if it seems inconsistent, these opposing traits can be shown in other persons, and thus bring the hero's characteristics into stronger relief.

Each character as a whole must be *self-consistent*. The various characteristics attributed to him must not be contradictory. The hero may be proud and at the same time generous, but he will scarcely be proud and sympathetic. This does not mean that each personage is a single virtue or vice incarnate, such as hatred, stinginess, flattery, fear, or insolence. Human beings are complex, and such drastic simplification reduces them to mere personifications, unhuman and uninteresting. But even if the traits attributed to each are not inconsistent, there must be more than

an enumeration of them. It is not enough that other personages in the play attribute this or that trait to him. He must reveal that trait to us by his own action. We must be able to assert that he has that characteristic from what we ourselves see him doing. More than all there must be a unity of character. A number of traits, even if actually exhibited by one person on the stage, would not constitute a self-consistent personage. These traits must be so related, so proportionately assembled, so emotionally vitalized, that they form a complete and living personality.

The characters must have what for lack of a better term might be called *universality*. They must be intelligible to a wide range of auditors. While each doubtless has some peculiarity, none of them may be so peculiar that he seems utterly different from us. His actions must not be wholly outside of our experience, or we are likely to think that he is not natural. Our verdict will be, "Folk do not act that way," or even, "Nobody would do such a thing," when we really mean, that so far as our personal observation extends, people do not act thus. The character portrayed must be sufficiently universal that the general public can enter into his adventures and experience with a reasonably full understanding, and intelligent sympathy.

How much must we develop the characters in the story of Naaman before they fulfill these require-

ments for the stage? The first draft we transcribe may read as follows:

SCENE I

[A large luxurious room in NAAMAN'S house. Large doorway in rear right, alcove in rear left. Platform one or two steps high down left on which is a rich rug and a divan. Heavy rug on floor. Bas-relief of the God Rimmon or Hadad-rimmon down right. Small low table down center with thick cushion on floor above it. ZARA, NAAMAN'S wife, is seated upon this, admiring and sorting jewelry, silver and gold earrings, pendants, plates, goblets, etc. In the alcove HADASSAH, a slave girl, is playing a lyre or small harp, and singing snatches of twenty-third Psalm. NAAMAN'S mother is seated or reclining on the divan. A Nubian slave brings her coffee in a brass cup on a brass tray. She drinks.]

MOTHER. Take it to thy mistress, and then bring me sweetmeats.

ZARA. My lord's bravery hath filled his palace with silver and gold. His strength hath showered me with silk and broidery.

MOTHER. I thought Naaman was very quiet this morning, rather anxious about something. Can it be that the King's favor is turning to some one else?

ZARA. Nay, mother, Naaman is the chief noble at

the King's court. Only yesterday my lord was summoned to his presence and the King gave him a bronze necklace with a blood-red ruby in the center, as big as—as Hadassah's eye—a magical jewel that hath power over the spirits of evil. Now no hostile arrow can reach him.

MOTHER. Perchance he is planning some new foray; to lead an army against Bashan, or Israel, or Moab.

ZARA. Nay, the hand of Naaman hath already brought deliverance to Syria, and his sword hath subdued all these enemies.

HADASSAH [*eagerly coming center*]. O lily of the morning, behold my lord cometh. See him through the lattice, yonder!

ZARA. My veil, Hadassah, and the chaplet of pearls.

[HADASSAH *adjusts veil on head and chaplet to hold it.*]

MOTHER. The child always has a glad welcome for my son.

ZARA. Yea, she remembers the rough soldier from whom Naaman saved her.

HADASSAH. He was beating me to death, O silver-haired Princess, because I was so tired, I couldn't carry the bundle. I couldn't. And my lord paid him gold to rescue me, and brought me here—to you [*to ZARA with a trustful smile*].

[NAAMAN *enters and goes left to his mother and bows.*]

MOTHER [*to NAAMAN*]. Peace to my lord! Is all well, my son?

ZARA. The blessings of Rimmon crown my lord who is the light of thy handmaiden's eyes. [*Bows, then goes left to embrace him.*]

NAAMAN [*with gesture of rejection keeps her at a distance*]. Nay, Rimmon and all the other gods have conspired against me. The priest, the King's high priest, hath declared me a leper.

ZARA. A leper! O my lord, wherefore . . . ?

MOTHER. The venomous liars, may their throats be choked with dust.

NAAMAN. Nay, mother, it is true. [*Pulls up sleeve.*] See, it is leprosy. Thy son is a leper.

MOTHER. A leper! The gods forbid. The captain of the King's host a leper. [*Throws self face down on divan.*]

ZARA [*with tears in her voice*]. O my dear lord, not a leper, not that! [*Sinks on floor near Rimmon.*]

NAAMAN. The captain of the King's host can destroy all the King's enemies . . . and gather the treasures of the nations for spoil, but no man . . . can give surety for his own life. [*Sits in slump on taboret.*]

ZARA. The gods are jealous of my lord's victories. Therefore they have smitten him. I should have given thee my amulet. [*With a great start.*] The King's jewel that he gave thee! Did it not protect thee?

NAAMAN [*shakes head*]. Nay, I became a leper the very day I put it on.

MOTHER. My son, make a great offering to the gods. Surely thou canst appease them, and turn aside their anger.

NAAMAN. Nay, mother, the priests have banished me from the temple of Rimmon. I cannot even speak to the gods.

ZARA. But thy lord Ben-Hadad! Could not the King command them to open unto thee?

NAAMAN. Nay, little violet eyes, the King dare not defy the gods. He will make a great offering for me, and sacrifice a thousand oxen. For he needs me. The tribes of the north have broken forth again, and are pouring upon the villages of Lebanon. He hath sent Rammoni to meet them with a hundred chariots and ten thousand footmen. But he is young and rash. He was ever nagging me to charge. Oh, if only I could have gone myself! But now I am a leper, and all my power withers. I must live a prisoner in my own house. If I go into the highways, men will curse me. If I enter the market place, they will stone me with stones. It will be a living death and . . . the King's greatest captain is cast into the dungeon of eternity.

HADASSAH [*to wife*]. Can my lord not be happy in this beautiful palace with the loveliness of my mistress?

ZARA. Nay, little maid. Men are not like us, content to stay in the home nest. When the doors are shut upon them, even a palace is a cage.

HADASSAH. But everything here is so beautiful and wonderful. . . .

NAAMAN [*to himself*]. To rot to death piecemeal, a leper!

HADASSAH [*gasps with horror, then recovering herself speaks earnestly to ZARA*]. Why does my lord not go to the prophet?

ZARA. Go to the prophet! What prophet, child?

HADASSAH [*with wide eyes*]. Is there not a prophet in Damascus?

ZARA [*shaking head*]. No, there is no prophet here . . . unless one of the mad Mullah's dervishes has swept in from the desert.

HADASSAH [*dazed at the inconceivable statement*]. No prophet! [*Lower tone.*] Why, how can you . . . how can you . . . ? If my lord were in my land, *our* prophet could heal him of his leprosy.

ZARA. What sayst thou, Hadassah? Thy prophet could heal him? [HADASSAH *nods.*] My lord Naaman, dost hear this child's prattle? Say it again, Hadassah. Tell my lord.

HADASSAH [*turns to NAAMAN*]. My lord Elisha, the prophet that is in Samaria, he could recover thee of thy leprosy, if thou wert in my land.

NAAMAN [*shakes head*]. Nay, child.

MOTHER Thou couldst soon be there, my son.

NAAMAN [*shaking head sadly*]. Chasing shadows?
for a child's prattle? Nay, 'tis some nursery tale.
[HADASSAH *is much disappointed, wipes a tear
away with back of hand.*]

ZARA. Nay, my lord, say not so. If thou wert bidden
do some great thing, wouldst thou not do it, if
haply thy leprosy should be cleansed? It is a small
matter for my lord to journey to Samaria; even
if no healing were found there.

NAAMAN. Thou art the light of mine eyes. But . . .
alas, I cannot depart out of my house.

MOTHER. Surely the King will send you in peace.

NAAMAN. I cannot approach the King, to present
my petition.

ZARA. Oh, my dear lord, thy handmaid will go to the
King. I am but a woman. Yet perchance they will
admit the wife of the King's great captain. I will
take the child with me, and it may be we shall find
favor in his sight.

NAAMAN. Nay, I am ashamed to ask such a childish
thing. Men would point at me for a fool.

MOTHER. Will they not point at thee now, for a
leper? My son, how much honor will they pay
thee now? Scorn weighs little when the heart is
light, and even less when it is burdened with woe.
And if peradventure you should find healing. . . .
Oh, my son, let them go in peace.

NAAMAN [*after a moment nods permission*]. Go, and
do what seemeth best.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[*Before ELISHA's house. ELISHA sits on rock seat teaching a group of six or eight disciples seated on the ground. They are chanting a psalm as ELISHA lines it out. GEHAZI barefooted in a tunic comes in with small jar of water and a rather clumsy heavy brown earthenware cup. He pours water and gives to ELISHA and the rest, who drink. He goes out.*]

ELISHA. They that trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves of great riches [*points to one group*],
None of them can redeem his life
Nor pay unto God his ransom [*points to second group*],
That he should live on forever,
That he should not see corruption [*points to third group*].

FIRST GROUP [*chants*]. They that trust in their wealth,

And boast themselves of great riches,

SECOND GROUP [*chants*]. None of them can redeem his life,

Nor pay unto God his ransom;

THIRD GROUP [*chants*]. That he should live on forever;

That he should not see corruption.

ELISHA. They are appointed as a flock for the grave.
Death shall be their shepherd.

The grave shall be their habitation forever ;
And the upright shall trample them in the morning.

ALL [*chant together*]. They are appointed as a flock for the grave.

Death shall be their shepherd.

The grave shall be their habitation forever ;
And the upright shall trample them in the morning.

GEHAZI [*rushes in excited*]. My lord Elisha, there is a chariot at the gate, a chariot. A chariot and a great captain from Syria.

SOME DISCIPLES. From Syria? Are the Syrians upon us?

ELISHA [*calms them with a gesture*]. It is peace.

GEHAZI. He calls for my lord Elisha, but . . . but . . . [*in awed half whisper*] he is a leper.

ELISHA [*with a glance to his disciples*]. Yea, my children, although he has great riches and all the armies of Damascus are in his hand, yet he is a leper.

GEHAZI. He asked if thou wert the prophet that heals men by magic.

ELISHA. By magic! He would. No doubt he would think that, with his heathen gods. Magic! The workman heweth down a cedar. He taketh part to burn. He warmeth himself, he roasteth flesh and is satisfied. And from what is left he maketh a god. With a sharp axe he shapeth it after the

figure of a man. He falleth down unto it and saith, "Deliver me for thou art my god." [*He towers up and his mocking mood turns to majesty.*] Jehovah, he is God. [*Pause.*] Gehazi, show the Syrian captain the road to the Jordan. Bid him bathe seven times, and his flesh shall be clean.

GEHAZI. But . . . but . . . will you not see him? His armor is inlaid with gold, and his raiment is fine linen, brodered with blue and silver. His sandals . . .

ELISHA [*laughing*]. Peace, peace, Gehazi. Am I a woman to be curious about ornaments? Haste thee. Keep not the stranger waiting.

[*Exit GEHAZI. ELISHA resumes his instruction.*]

Be not afraid when one is made rich. When he dieth, he shall carry nought away. But is cut off like the beasts that perish.

ALL DISCIPLES [*chanting*]. Be not afraid when one is made rich. When he dieth, he shall carry nought away. But is cut off like the beasts that perish.

ELISHA. But God will ransom my life. He will snatch me from the power of the grave.

ALL [*chant*]. But God will ransom my life. He will snatch me from the power of the grave.

ELISHA. Yea, it is God. God everywhere. God in everything. [*Beating time.*] They that trust in their wealth.

ALL [*chanting*]. They that trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves of great riches,
None of them can redeem his life. . . .

GEHAZI [*enters, ushering in three Syrians, each carrying a bundle wrapped in dark burlap tied with dark rope; he speaks with excited enthusiasm*]. My lord Elisha, the captain of the hosts of Syria hath sent thee a present; a thousand pieces of gold, five talents of silver, and . . . and Syrian raiment of . . .

ELISHA [*with gesture stops GEHAZI*]. Sh-h. [*To the Syrians.*] Take back to thy master the gold, and the silver, and the gorgeous raiment. Have I not enough? the sheep and oxen of Shaphat my father, and the barley field in Abel-Meholah? And doth not the prophetess spin the wool and [*fingers his robe*] weave the garments for her household? Depart in peace. [*Dismisses them with wave of hand.*] As Jehovah liveth, I will not take a thread or a shoe latchet from the Syrians, lest men say, "Elisha speaketh for reward and prophesieth for hire." [*Exeunt.*] Am I not the servant of Jehovah the God of Israel? in whose hand are the cattle on a thousand hills.

PROPHETESS [*at door*]. Behold, my lord Elisha, I have prepared a morsel of food for thee and thy scholars. Wilt thou arise and eat?

ELISHA [*rising, bows to his wife*]. Many women have done worthily, but thou excellest them all. Come, my sons, and let us eat. [*They rise, dust*

themselves and stretch out hands to pray.] Better is a little with the fear of God, than great treasure and trouble therewith. [*Starts to door.*] Gehazi, bring water.

NAAMAN [*outside, in angry voice*]. Where is this prophet? this Hebrew seer? Can he not come out and salute me? Wherefore will he not take this present from my hand? Is it not rich enough to satisfy him? [*Bursts in, followed by several of his soldiers.*] Where is this prophet of a defeated nation?

ELISHA [*standing on step of door, turns*]. Seekest thou Elisha? He is not the prophet of a defeated nation. He is the prophet of Jehovah, the God of heaven. In His hand are all nations; yea, and Orion and the Pleiades. He shaketh the earth, and its pillars tremble, Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him. [*Leaves through door.*]

NAAMAN. The prophet! Is it not? Elisha?

SERVANT [*bows*]. Will my lord drive to the Jordan?

NAAMAN. To the Jordan! Am I a dog that he should turn his face from me? Behold, I thought he would wave his hand over the place, and call upon his God, and the leprosy would depart. But to bathe in the Jordan! Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? By the temple of Rimmon, I will tear down his house and burn it with fire.

A SOLDIER [*bowing low*]. Let not the heart of my

lord be moved. Peradventure the prophet speaketh for some great God.

ANOTHER SOLDIER [*bowing low*]. My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, such as no man could do, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then this ride to the Jordan?

NAAMAN [*after struggling for self-control*]. Thou hast spoken wisely. Bid the horsemen lead on. [*He stands discouraged and limp, then takes a long breath, braces up and goes out. At the entrance gate he turns and speaks to ELISHA's disciples.*] Which way, I pray you, is this Jordan?

DISCIPLE [*goes to him*]. My lord, thy servant will run before thy chariot.

[NAAMAN inclines head and goes out; the young man follows. ELISHA returns, followed by GEHAZI with brass basin and pitcher, who pours water over the hands of each. They rub their hands together over the basin, and dry them on a towel GEHAZI carries on his arm. GEHAZI brings in a bowl of stew, sets it on the ground, then some barley cakes (like thin farls of oat-cake) which he distributes. Each dips into the stew with a bit of the bread.]

A DISCIPLE. My lord Elisha, Jabez hath gone before the captain's chariot to lead him to the Jordan.

CURTAIN

SCENE III

[*Before ELISHA'S house. ELISHA reading a scroll and writing. His wife spinning. Disciples seated or standing with hazel hoe, rake, sickle, etc. GEHAZI enters in haste.*]

GEHAZI. My lord Elisha, the chariot of the Syrian captain is coming again.

ELISHA. Let my lord Naaman enter. [GEHAZI leaves.]

PROPHETESS. I will take my distaff to the housetop.
[*She leaves by the door. Turns in doorway as GEHAZI ushers in NAAMAN.*]

NAAMAN. Peace to this house, my father.

ELISHA. And to you be peace, my son.

NAAMAN. Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth like the God of Israel. And thou art his prophet. [*He bows very low.*] I washed seven times in the Jordan, and behold my flesh [*rolls up sleeve*] has come again like the flesh of a little child. Now, therefore, I pray thee, my father, take a present from thy servant; ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold and ten garments from Babylon. Behold it is a little thing, for thou hast restored my life unto me.

ELISHA. Nay, my son, as Jehovah liveth before whom I stand, I will receive nothing from thy hand.

NAAMAN. Oh, my father, let thy servant prevail in

this. [*ELISHA shakes head.*] I would bring thee a blessing for thy great kindness unto me, and this great healing.

ELISHA. It is not in me. The hand of Jehovah hath touched thee, and healed thee. Give thanks unto him and bless his name.

NAAMAN. But thou art his prophet, my father. Accept this present, I beseech thee, as a token of my remembrance.

ELISHA. Nay, my son. Do thus accept Jehovah's blessing, who blesses thee, and me, and all the earth.

NAAMAN. If thou wilt not, in any wise, accept this present, give me now, I pray thee, two mules' burden of earth to carry back to Damascus, that I may stand upon it every morning to pray from it unto the God of Israel.

ELISHA. Surely thou mayst carry the sacks of Israel's soil back to Damascus, but it needs not, for Jehovah is not the God of this land but of the whole earth. Yea, the sea is his, for he made it, the earth with all that is therein.

NAAMAN. Henceforth even in the land of Rimmon I will worship no God but Jehovah, for he hath given thy servant life. [*Kneels with bowed head.*] Let me, my father, depart in peace.

ELISHA [*with both hands in benediction*]. Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

[The richly caparisoned soldiers gleaming with metal on one side, the disciples in long robes or tunics on other. ELISHA standing on the steps at the rear, left of center, NAAMAN kneeling before him right of center.]

CURTAIN

This draft shows the characters more fully than they appear in the story, without contradicting anything said about them there. From this point some of them can be developed still further. But shall it be Naaman, or the little captive maid, or Elisha? Only one can be made the most prominent. The others must become background, or mere helps to develop more fully the central personage about whom the plot is to be constructed.

Let us take another incident, found in the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth chapters of the second book of Chronicles. It is the ingratitude of King Jehoash, who was, on the whole, a good man. Here is a good study of character. What motive could bring such a good man to murder his foster-brother, the son of his oldest friend? It is characteristic of all kings, indeed of all men that prosper greatly, to become autocratic, to be rather impatient of restraint and especially to resent as

unwarrantable dictation any moral suggestions made by those that befriended them in their humble days, and helped them to rise. This sense of constraint, felt for forty years, might break out into sudden flaming rage, if skillfully incited.

THE KING FORGETS

THE CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

JEHOASH, King of Judah, about 47 years old.

QUEEN JEHOADDIN, his wife—about 45.

PRINCE AMAZIAH, their son—24 years.

PRINCESS JECOLIAH, his wife.

JEHOSHEBEATH, the king's aunt, wife of **JEHOIADA** the High Priest.

ZECHARIAH, her son, High Priest after his father's death—47 years.

THUTESO, an Egyptian noble, Pharaoh's ambassador.

JOZACAR, a noble of Judah, one of the younger generation, friendly to **THUTESO**.

ADAH and **ZILLAH**, the **QUEEN**'s tirewomen.

JONIAH and **SAMAN**, two soldiers, on guard in the Temple Court.

JEHOIADA, the High Priest—83 but strong.

SCENE: *The court of the Temple, adjoining the King's palace, in Jerusalem.*

TIME: *In the reign of KING JEHOASH.*

[*On the left four or five steps and a broad platform, leading to the Temple through a row of pillars. A sky drop at rear of stage, behind a stone balustrade. An opening in the balustrade about the center, evidently for a flight of steps which leads up to the Temple Court from a lower level. Down right the audience can see a bit of the brazen laver, and the head and shoulders of one of the brazen bulls that support it. An entrance, right, above the laver.*]

[THUTESO, an Egyptian nobleman, the ambassador from Pharaoh, is speaking earnestly but in a low voice with JOZACAR, a Hebrew noble.]

JOZACAR. But the King said no?

THUTESO. He said that the policy of Jerusalem is against foreign alliances.

JOZACAR. You reminded him of Solomon and his Egyptian queen?

THUTESO. Oh, yes, but he said that very instance had proved it an unwise policy.

JOZACAR. Oh, Horns of Hebron! That is Jehoiada's talk; the High Priest, you know. He has managed our religion for us so long, that he wants to manage the government too. The King might look with favor on our schemes if Jehoiada was not always admonishing him.

THUTESO [*with a superior smile*]. Is your King in-

curably religious? Can't you turn him against this priest?

JOZACAR. Well, Jehoash is pretty religious . . . but . . . you see he owes everything to the old priest. Jehoiada and his wife saved his life in the massacre when he was a baby. They hid him and nursed him for years in their own house. It is right here by the palace. They risked their lives for him every day. It is a miracle that Queen Athaliah never found him. She thought that the priest's wife had twins. [*Laughs.*] Then when the boy was seven years old, Jehoiada managed the revolution, killed the usurping Queen—Athaliah—and made Jehoash King.

THUTESO. Made himself King at the same time, eh?

JOZACAR. Exactly. Jehoash wears the crown, but his uncle pulls the strings.

THUTESO [*startled*]. His uncle? Did you say his uncle?

JOZACAR. Yes, the old priest is the King's uncle. The priest's wife, Jehoshebeath, is his foster-mother, and his aunt. She was his father's half-sister.

THUTESO. By the head of Anubis! I did not know he was the King's uncle. And saved his very life as well! At the risk of his own! No wonder the old fellow has a throttling hold on your counsels. The King's uncle! But . . . how old is he? He can't last forever.

JOZACAR [*with despairing gesture*]. Centuries old. [*THUTESO laughs boisterously.*] And never feeble

a day in his life! He'll live forever. I wish the old fool *would* die.

THUTESO. Couldn't you . . . [*glancing furtively around, then in a lower tone*] Couldn't you . . . push him off?

JOZACAR [*shaking head*]. It would have to be terribly secret.

THUTESO. One of my men could stab him. Then, to avert suspicion, I would cut the slave's head off with my scimitar.

JOZACAR [*aghast at the horrid coolness*]. No. They would suspect it. Egyptian intrigue!

THUTESO. Well, what about poison? . . . a slow poison? . . . or a single drop that would kill ten men.

JOZACAR. No chance to give it. The priests never eat with the rest of us. And Jehoiada eats only the plainest food. He would refuse any dish we might send him. Besides, his son, Zechariah, has eyes like a hawk. He would never let a strange dish get to his father. No, there is no possible chance to poison him. [*A thoughtful pause.*] Better try to win the Prince Amaziah over to our side. I sometimes think that he is rather restive at the old priest's interference. And of course he does not feel so much personal obligation as the King.

THUTESO [*nods*]. By the eyes of my father's god, Horus! Keep your eyes open and there will be some chance. "Horus helps those that wink not

their eyes," eh? I will burn incense to the Falcon god, that he may strike the prey. Farewell. [*Goes down the steps at rear, but turns before descending.*] Ah, I forgot. Here is a caravan of silks and ivories coming. Three camel loads for my brother. Farewell. [*Descends.*]

JOZACAR. Hush! Be careful. [*Looks after THUTESO and around.*] These Egyptians are so sudden . . . and never cautious. But his presents are beautiful, and bring a full purse. [*AMAZIAH the Prince, and his wife JECOLIAH, enter quietly from the right, evidently in earnest conversation with ZECHARIAH, who is dressed in priest's garments. JOZACAR does not at first observe their entrance.*] Ah! [*He recoils, startled, then recovers himself, and greets the Prince and Princess effusively.*] My Lord Amaziah, may the god of sunshine give you good health. And to thee, O Princess, many children, O thou Beauty of the morning. [*More formally.*] And peace unto my Lord Zechariah.

AMAZIAH. We thank you, Jozacar. [*To ZECHARIAH.*] I wonder if he can tell us. Jozacar, what is this rumor of Syrian invasion? I would like to know about it before my father hears it. When he asks my opinion, I want to have certain knowledge of the matter. Is the spy that discovered this one of your men?

JOZACAR. Nay, my lord, he was no spy of mine. Was he not one of the King's captains?

AMAZIAH. I know not who he was. That is what I am asking.

JOZACAR. I know not, my lord.

ZECHARIAH. Probably some Egyptian renegade.

AMAZIAH [*to JOZACAR*]. Well, tell me what you have heard about it.

SOLDIER [*entering from right*]. Behold, the King cometh. Make the King's path clear.

JOZACAR [*startled*]. The King!

ZECHARIAH [*bows to AMAZIAH*]. I will go to seek my father, O Prince. [*Goes out rear.*]

KING JEHOASH. [*Enters quietly with no parade, thoughtfully reading a short letter. He steps down stage a little, motioning the QUEEN and her ladies to go on. They cross the stage, go up the steps and enter the Temple. The KING turns to the messenger who entered with him.*] When did he give you this?

MESSANGER. Just now. I had scarcely left him when I found you, O King.

KING JEHOASH. This is rather alarming. [*He re-reads the letter.*]

AMAZIAH [*approaching with his wife*]. May the King live forever.

PRINCESS JECOLIAH. And may all thy wishes prosper.

KING JEHOASH [*nods response*]. My son, send for Jehoiada. He sends me word [*showing letter*] that there is a conspiracy. An Egyptian conspiracy.

AMAZIAH. My father, is not the old man . . . a little prejudiced?

KING JEHOASH. He is rather severe. And yet . . . he is generally right. But I do wish he were less insistent. He sometimes seems to forget. . . .

AMAZIAH. He forgets, my father, that you are the King. [*Bows and goes out.*]

KING JEHOASH. I wish I could forget that he made me King.

PRINCESS. Was that not his duty?

KING JEHOASH. I suppose it was, my daughter. But it was a very dangerous duty. And danger makes men forget duties. Jehoiada saved me when no one else dared. Every one was afraid of my terrible grandmother, the Queen Athaliah. She was like the shadow of death . . . or a flame of lightning, secret, swift, terrible. [*He shudders.*] I saw her once, when . . .

AMAZIAH [*enters in excitement*]. Jehoiada hath fallen down the steps, and lieth like one dead.

KING JEHOASH. Let them bring him quickly.

AMAZIAH. They have taken him to his chamber in the Temple wall. My mother is there helping Aunt Jehoshebeath.

KING JEHOASH. Find my physician, and send him also. Hasten him. [*AMAZIAH goes out right.*]

JEHOSHEBEATH [*enters left through pillars, comes down the steps*]. My Lord Jehoash, wilt thou cause men to search for my son, Zechariah? And bring him to his father.

KING JEHOASH [*hastening to her*]. How is it with mine uncle?

JEHOSHEBEATH. He knoweth not when we touch him. Nay, he knoweth not when I speak. I have lived with him three score years and five, and he never failed to answer me before. Three score and five years. He will never answer me again. [*She sinks upon seat at foot of steps. The KING comforts her.*]

KING JEHOASH. There now. Thou art as the mother of the King. Comfort thy heart, Jehoshebeath. Thou shalt come into the King's palace, and abide there forever.

JEHOSHEBEATH. Nay, my son. I have lived all these years in the wall of the sanctuary. God forbid that I should leave it until they lay me to rest in the sepulcher of my fathers.

AMAZIAH [*enters between pillars*]. The King's physician standeth at his bed, until . . . until . . .

JEHOSHEBEATH. Send for my son. Bring Zechariah. Peradventure his father may know him, and bless him before he dies.

AMAZIAH. I will send and find him. [*Goes out rear.*

KING *assists* JEHOSHEBEATH *up the steps to the Temple. ADA and ZILLAH, the QUEEN's hand-maidens, enter from right. They are chattering about a gay scarf ADAH is displaying.*]

ZILLAH. Oh, I wish you would weave me one just like it. Isn't it beautiful? As rich as the looms of Babylon can furnish.

SOLDIER [*goes to them rapidly, speaks in loud whisper*]. Hush thee; hush, woman.

ADAH. What is the matter? Has the King bad tidings?

SOLDIER. Jehoiada the High Priest hath fallen on the steps, and . . . [*with a glance towards the KING disappearing*] he will die.

ZILLAH. The old priest? Well, the King will not grieve much for that, I hope.

ADAH. Silence thy tongue, girl. The priest's wife [*pointing*] is the King's aunt.

SOLDIER. And his foster-mother. She saved him when he was a baby. When all his brothers and kinsmen were slain by the wicked Queen Athaliah. Why, she nursed him, and hid him for seven years.

ZILLAH. Hid him? and nursed . . . for seven years? Oh, tell me about it.

ADAH. Joniah here can tell you. He helped.

SOLDIER. I know not how she hid him. But when he was eight years old, Jehoiada gathered a number of trusty soldiers—I was a lad, but big and strong—and we made the boy King. By the bones of the dragon, that was an exciting time. When she heard the shouting, the Queen rushed in yonder. She was furious. She would have stabbed the boy, but we surrounded her. She did stab Joba, but we pushed her outside and finished her. That spear-head went through her neck.

ZILLAH. This spear? Let me see it. [*Takes the spear and runs her hand over the iron point.*]

SOLDIER. I've put a new shaft in it since then, but that was the very spear-point. Hush, here comes the old man's son. [*Turns and pushes the women aside as PRINCE AMAZIAH enters with ZECHARIAH, followed by the PRINCESS JECOLIAH.*]

AMAZIAH [*looking around*]. She must have gone back into the Temple, to your father. [*They cross and go up steps.*]

JECOLIAH. I have brought a cordial. It might revive him . . . long enough to speak. Spiced wine from Samarcand.

ADAH [*with ZILLAH following, comes forward*]. Let me carry it, O Princess. [*The three women follow the two men.*]

THUTESO [*with JOZACAR, enters hastily but furtively, shrinking back until the PRINCESS disappears*]. I don't see the old fellow.

JOZACAR. Probably inside the Temple. Hope he'll stay there.

THUTESO. Why, there is the King, and alone. Quick. [*They hasten to the KING, who is coming through the Temple pillars. They bow low. The KING comes down a step or two.*] Tidings for my lord, the King. Hobah has been spying in Damascus.

KING JEHOASH. Ha!

JOZACAR. The Syrians are preparing to send an army against Jerusalem.

KING JEHOASH. So I have heard. But the rumor is somewhat vague, and unconfirmed.

THUTESO [*exchanges glances with JOZACAR*]. By

the tender heart of Isis! Though I serve the lord Pharaoh, I . . . I . . . my Lord King, I would serve you also . . . even though Pharaoh take my head for it. [*Glances around for privacy.*] The servants of the great Pharaoh have brought me secret tidings of it, which I will reveal to the King's eyes.

KING JEHOASH [*gazes off, musing*]. Egyptian tidings! I wonder . . . [*Looks sideways at THUTESO as if trying to fathom his scheming.*] It might be true. [*Stretches out hand to THUTESO.*] Come, let me lean upon thine arm. Jozacar, stay here and wait for Prince Amaziah. Tell him to prepare a great funeral for Jehoiada. [*Goes up steps with THUTESO.*]

JOZACAR [*pale with astonishment*]. A funeral for Jehoiada! What can he mean?

SOLDIER. May thy servant speak? The High Priest fell down the steps and he is dying or dead.

JOZACAR. Dying! Jehoiada dying!

SOLDIER. [*nodding towards Temple*]. In there. The King and the Queen are with him, and . . . [*Conversation sinks into a murmur, as blue lights come on and whites dim.*]

JOZACAR. But art thou sure he will die?

SOLDIER. Alas, there is no hope. Did not the King give my lord orders for his funeral?

THUTESO [*comes hilariously down the Temple steps*]. It is all right. I have . . . [*Sees the soldier and stops.*]

JOZACAR [*hastens to him*]. Thuteso, the High Priest is dying. The King hath ordered a great funeral.

THUTESO. Ha! Good! We'll have a sacrifice to . . . to your Baal. I'll bring up dancing women, and twenty skins of wine. And the young nobles that come to the funeral can stay afterwards for a feast.

JOZACAR. But there will be thirty days of mourning. No wine, no dancing. We cannot have a feast till after the mourning is ended.

THUTESO. Well, we'll make it part of the funeral . . . a . . . lamentation, that's it—we must have the wine and the women, somehow.

JOZACAR. Well, maybe we might; now that Jehoiada will not be there, nagging and scolding us. Always mixing his religion in politics, or pleasures. To hear him talk, everything was religion. He had to consult his God about everything.

THUTESO. Why was he so set against Egypt? It was really insulting the way he spoke to me, when I tried to put him in his place.

JOZACAR. Yes, he was always storming against an alliance with Egypt. [*Mimicking in deep voice.*] "Beware, lest ye make a covenant with hell." Hell! ha-ha-ha. I wonder what the old duffer thinks hell is, anyway.

THUTESO. Maybe he has found out by this time. [*They laugh.*]

JOZACAR. Well, I'm glad he is dead at last. Now perhaps we can manage to influence the King a

little, without the old eagle's eye watching us every minute. [*ADAH and ZILLAH come down steps with bloody garments, which they hold away from them so as not to soil their dresses. One white garment, and one blue and gold sleeveless over-tunic.*]

THUTESO. What is this? What is this?

JOZACAR. Ah, my pretty dove, what is thy burden?

ZILLAH. The priest's robes. They must be washed in the brook Kidron.

THUTESO. The brook Kidron!

ADAH. Aye, running water must cleanse the blood of the dead. As soon as they are cleansed, Zechariah is to be consecrated High Priest.

JOZACAR. Zechariah! to be High Priest! I never thought of that . . . of course he would.

THUTESO. Why, what's the matter, man? By the nose of Anubis, you look as if you were smitten with the plague.

JOZACAR. Zechariah to be High Priest! Our schemes are done for. Zechariah is as stubborn as his father. And just as bitter against Egypt. And he has an eye like an eagle. He will urge the King. . . . Oh, we might as well give up. I wish the old fellow hadn't died. He was growing feeble, but his son . . . we'll never fool *him*. He is as keen as a wolf hound.

[The blue lights dim down to darkness. The stage is cleared. Then lights come up white. ZECHARIAH, wearing the garments of the High

Priest, is speaking earnestly to the KING and PRINCE AMAZIAH, soldiers and citizens present.]

KING JEHOASH. But we have sent our own spies. Damascus is certainly preparing war.

ZECHARIAH. Damascus is always preparing war. But is it against you? And if it is, has not Egypt stirred her up to it with bribes? Egypt wants you for a buffer state, between the Nile and Assyria.

AMAZIAH. Have you any evidence of all that?

ZECHARIAH. Evidence? Why, Jehoiada my father always warned you against the allurements of Egypt.

AMAZIAH. Jehoiada is dead. [ZECHARIAH looks surprised at this attitude of hostility.]

KING JEHOASH. I am following my own policies now.

ZECHARIAH. Alas, my Lord King, you are following Egypt's policies.

KING JEHOASH [*with sudden anger*]. How dare you speak so . . . so . . .

AMAZIAH. Jehoiada was always harping on the diplomacy of Egypt, which interfered with his policies.

ZECHARIAH. But . . . but . . . my father's policies were the commands of Jehovah, the God of our fathers.

KING JEHOASH. He seemed to think so. He was always old-fashioned about our foreign affairs.

ZECHARIAH. Old-fashioned!

KING JEHOASH. And old. He could not keep up with the times. He thought all the new ideas were foolish or wicked. Naturally enough. He was an old man. I deferred to him too much. But he had done a good deal for me. I did not like to hurt him. He was always a faithful servant of the throne, but . . . he . . . uh . . .

ZECHARIAH. Aye, he was a faithful servant of the throne, because he was faithful to the throne of God. [*The KING starts angrily. ZECHARIAH turns to the people in the court.*] O men of Judah, hearken unto your God. . . .

KING JEHOASH. Stop!

ZECHARIAH. Why transgress ye the ways of Jehovah, to follow foreign idols, and the licentious Asherim? And the women and the wine of Baal? Ye shall not prosper. The wrath of Jehovah your God will come upon you. . . .

KING JEHOASH. Stop, I say.

ZECHARIAH. If ye forsake the commandments of the Lord, as my father Jehoiada spoke unto you, then shall he smite you, you and your wives and your little ones.

KING JEHOASH. Stop him. Smite him. Who is he to withstand the King? [*Several rush upon ZECHARIAH. Others shout angrily. A soldier wounds him with a sword. He staggers towards the Temple steps, where the KING stands. The KING seizes a spear from a soldier and thrusts it into ZECHARIAH, who falls. Some lift him to a seat, rear,*

where he leans back against the wall. The KING, horror-stricken at what he has done, staggers down front, below the first step. He turns as he hears JEHOSEBEATH's voice. She is at the top of the steps with the QUEEN. Hearing the angry voices, they entered hastily, in time to see the murder of ZECHARIAH.]

JEHOSEBEATH. Oh, my son! Zechariah, my son. [*Covers her face with her hands, then turns to the KING.*] Jehoash, did I save you from the dagger of Athaliah, that you should slay my son? [*The QUEEN tries to comfort her.*] Did you not both suck from the same breasts? We hid you and nourished you, and set you upon the throne, and . . . and now, you have thrust a spear through my heart.

KING JEHOASH [*sinks upon step*]. Nay, nay, stab me no more. [*The QUEEN sinks upon top step against a pillar. JEHOSEBEATH, having come down the steps, fondles ZECHARIAH.*]

JEHOSEBEATH. My son, my son, my own boy. [*He gasps and dies.*] Dead! [*She clasps her hands and bows her head. Suddenly she rises, draws herself up, and speaks quietly, but with the awful assurance of one seeing into the future.*] A King should be kingly in his soul. All the kindness of thine uncle thou hast put behind thy back. Was thy life not in our hands? Did we not hold it more precious than our own? Because thou hast forgotten the friends of thy youth, thou hast for-

saken Jehovah, thy God. Because thou dost lift thyself up proudly, shalt thou prosper? Nay, nay, thou too shalt die in a wallow of blood. The Lord thy God—for he is God, thou canst never forget that—he will require this at thy hand,—this innocent blood. [*She relaxes, glances at ZECHARIAH, then comes to the KING, who is cringing on the lowest step. Her voice is now tender and laden with tears.*] Oh, my son—for you are my son—I have given you life and—you have given me death.

SLOW CURTAIN

CHAPTER SIX

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS—EMOTION

Perhaps the most frequent failure in amateur dramatization is the deadness of the result. The divine spark is lacking. The emotions are not kindled. The dialogue is often reasonable, not to say obvious, but it does not move us. The only emotion stirred within us (if the production was fortunate enough to escape ridicule) is the satisfaction that our children acquitted themselves creditably and did not disgrace the family.

Of course the professional dramatist not infrequently makes a dismal failure at this same point. Sometimes he is much worse than the amateur, and to rescue a machine-made play from financial failure he stoops to devious theatrical tricks to win cheap laughter or applause. With dramatic critics such terms as "sob stuff" and "hokum" are almost as damnatory as "human interest" stories in magazines. But even these failures are a testimony to the prime necessity of emotion in a play.

A notable difference between drama and all other forms of literature is vividness. A play represents action as taking place before our eyes. It is thus

narrative at white heat. The personages in the natural course of their action often reveal strong feeling—admiration, enthusiasm, indignation, sympathy, veneration, scorn, hope, fear, tenderness, generosity, faithfulness, and the rest. This directness and immediacy gives the drama a great advantage in stimulating emotion—an advantage it must not let slip.

While uncultured, indiscriminating people do not always detect spurious expressions of imitational emotion, it remains true that the first requirement for the excitation of emotion is sincerity. The feeling expressed must be genuine. It may be a deep feeling, profound sorrow or unspeakable joy. It may be a light, airy feeling, a pleasant passing fancy, a touch of melancholy, sympathy or humor. But if the audience detect insincerity, woe to the play!

How can we inject into the story we are dramatizing this exquisite but volatile fragrance of emotion? No teaching can bestow the poetic touch, but a genuine understanding of the personages and their circumstances, and a real sympathy with them will go far. Many writers do not seem to consider that the persons of the play are worth much effort to understand. Consequently they cannot treat them with any real sympathy. The first requirement in this creating of character is to put yourself in his place. Look at his circumstances as if you yourself were unescapably conditioned by them. Take on his limitations of heredity or ignorance, his hopes and purposes, his

social conventions, his ambitions and fears, and by vivid imagination ascertain the motives for his actions. All his words and actions should grow naturally out of his character, out of what such a person in such circumstances would inevitably feel.

Isaiah's attempt to steady Ahaz, as recorded in Isaiah 7-8, may furnish an excellent example for the treatment of emotion. To understand the situation it would be well to read also II Chronicles 27-28, I Kings, 11:7, II Kings, 15:23-31, 16:1-9, 23:13, and the articles in the Hastings' Bible Dictionary on Ahaz, Jotham, Isaiah, Rezin, Pekah, Pekahiah, Tiglath-Pileser, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Moloch, Chemosh, and Ashtoreth.

In order to present the whole incident with the adequate showing of motives and consequences, the time must be considerably telescoped. Results must be shown that did not develop for many years.

AHAZ CASTS AWAY THE HERITAGE

[The scene is in the KING's palace at JERUSALEM; a spacious chamber with a double archway and pillars at the rear, opening to an open balcony; a door down left at which stands an enormous armed guard, a dais right on which is an ornate double throne. KING JOTHAM and the QUEEN-MOTHER, JERUSHA, are seated on this. KING JOTHAM is a man of unusual charm, thoughtful

but alert, and kingly without a trace of strut. He has grown wise with a kindly serenity. He often speaks with a winsome smile. Several women are above the QUEEN. A stalwart soldier guards the door, another stands at the archway. As the curtain rises, AZRIKAM the LORD CHAMBERLAIN, an elderly man with white hair and beard, is approaching the door. While age has not made him feeble, it has stolen the resilience from his step, and also from his mind. He is sufficiently senescent to make much of trifles. He nods to the guard, who opens the door. The CHAMBERLAIN cranes his head out, then comes back a few steps.]

CHAMBERLAIN. O King, my Lord Isaiah cometh through the gate. Shall he enter? [To QUEEN.] Will the mother of Israel listen to the prophet? [She smiles and nods.]

KING JOTHAM. Of a surety we will hear him, Azrikam. Haste thee to welcome him. Forget not, Azrikam, that my Lord Isaiah is of the blood royal, and of the king's household.

[The CHAMBERLAIN with furtive looks hastens out. Immediately he returns, backwards, bowing repeatedly and obsequiously, followed by the prophet ISAIAH. ISAIAH is dressed in a light golden brown tunic with a narrow green braid or embroidery near the edge, and wears a dull red cloak with a gold border. His beard is dark, not too long. He is dressed neatly but

simply for a man of his rank. ISALAH comes forward easily, bows to the KING and smilingly kisses the edge of the QUEEN-MOTHER's robe.]

KING JOTHAM. Welcome, cousin. Thou hast been hiding thyself from our eyes.

QUEEN-MOTHER. Yea. We have missed thee, my stalwart one. To whom hast thou been singing thy golden dreams of the city of Zion; thy vision of Jerusalem glorified?

KING JOTHAM. Golden dreams! Yea, it was a glorious word of prophecy. Sing us again your dream of the exalted destiny of Jerusalem.

ISALAH [*bows and chants*]. The mountain of Jehovah's house shall be exalted above all mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it. Out of Jerusalem shall go forth instruction. The nations shall listen to the word of Jehovah, and beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O House of Jacob, open wide thy doors. Come, let us walk in the light of Jehovah.

CHAMBERLAIN. Jerusalem the center of the earth. Zion above all nations. It was a great prophecy. Very much admired! I heard Prince Ahaz say . . .

ISALAH. It was the hope of my youth. All the enthusiasm of my boyhood dreams seemed to leap forward to grasp it like fairy treasure. But alas, I have learned by sad experience that Jerusalem

will have none of it. [*JOTHAM goes to arch, rear; AZRIKAM's mouth drops open in astonishment.*]

When I first saw the glorious vision that Jerusalem by the knowledge of Jehovah could lead the world, I was eager to carry out that great destiny. I could hardly wait. I thought everybody else would be eager also. But they regard not Jehovah. They never look beyond the things that lie about their feet. Their eyes are upon the work of their own hands. Their only thought is, "Let us buy and sell and get gain." The land is full of silver and gold. The judges justify the wicked for a bribe. The princes are companions of thieves. The import people are strong—to mingle strong drink. They rise up early in the morning that they may pursue—strong drink. They tarry late into the night till wine burns their brains to cinders. They trample upon the fatherless and hear not the cry of the widow. They build their palaces with the blood of the poor. But they shall not stand. A day shall come for judgment. The haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

CHAMBERLAIN. My Lord Isaiah, why dost thou speak of judgment? Jehovah has given us prosperity. What doom can come upon us when God has blessed us so richly?

ISAIAH. Is the spoil of the poor the blessing of God? Let the proud ones of Jerusalem hearken unto Jehovah.

What will ye do in the day of Assyria
 In the desolation which shall come from far?
 They shall come with speed swiftly.
 Their horses' hoofs shall be as flint,
 And the wheels of their chariots as a whirlwind,
 They shall roar like young lions, as they spring
 on their prey.

Yea, the heavens shall tremble, and the earth
 shall be shaken out of its place.

CHAMBERLAIN [*with mouth agape*]. You mean
 Jerusalem will be smitten by . . . by Assyria!
 Shall Tiglath-Pileser vaunt himself against
 Mount Zion? Can the gods of Ashur overcome our
 God? Assyria defy Jehovah?

ISAIAH. Nay, Azrikam, it is the princes and the
 priests of Jerusalem that defy Jehovah. There-
 fore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his
 people, and he shall stretch forth his hand against
 them with Assyria the rod of his anger. He shall
 smite them with a scourge that cometh from afar.

JOTHAM [*comes forward a few steps eagerly*]. What
 can we do, Isaiah, to avert that great and terrible
 day of Jehovah's judgment?

ISAIAH. The king shall reign in righteousness. He
 shall lead his flock like a shepherd. The wolf and
 the lion shall he slay with a strong hand.

CHAMBERLAIN. Jehovah give the King long life, for
 of a surety he is the shepherd of his people.
 [*Hears something, and goes out.*]

JOTHAM. Must the King smite the judges, and the

priests, and the elders of the people because they turn away from the needy and profane justice? Will it not shake the King's throne? Yet the spoil of the poor is in their houses. Every one lieth in wait for his neighbor. The priests and the prophets are swallowed up in wine; they stagger with strong drink. They have all made lies their refuge.

ISAIAH. Therefore Death hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp shall plunge down the depths of the grave. [*After a sad pause.*] But the Lord Jehovah shall be exalted in that day.

CHAMBERLAIN [*enters with an excited smile*]. Good news, O King, from beyond the Jordan! It is the captain of your host. It is my Lord Elkanah, just now returned from the land of Ammon. He comes in triumph, O King. With the tread of a conqueror.

JOTHAM [*to his mother*]. He went to get the tribute money from the Ammonites. [*To CHAMBERLAIN.*] Let him enter, Azrikam.

[CHAMBERLAIN *speaks through doorway.*
Hum of voices outside. Enter ELKANAH.]

JOTHAM. Greetings of peace, Elkanah.

ELKANAH. To thee long life, and to the mother of us all, and to thy house, O King.

QUEEN-MOTHER. Is it peace with the children of Ammon?

ELKANAH. It is peace, O Queen.

JOTHAM. Did they deliver the tribute into thy hand?

ELKANAH. The full tribute, O King: ten camels' burdens of silver, a hundred thousand measures of wheat, and a hundred thousand measures of barley.

JOTHAM. Good! A great tribute! A rich revenue! Thou art an able servant, Elkanah, a good ambassador. Thou art the joy of thy King. We have heard rumors that the tribes across the Jordan are making ready for war. Didst thou see any preparations? or hear any gossip about making swords and spears?

ELKANAH. I saw no signs of battle, O King. But one of the nobles did ask me whether we Hebrews were going to join with all the tribes against the Assyrians. So I thought there might be some plan of revolt; of refusing to pay the tribute to Tiglath-Pileser.

JOTHAM. There probably is. A foolish plan! Such whisperings are always buzzing in idle brains. There are too many little kingdoms. Scarcely kingdoms at all. Rude chiefs of wandering tribesmen! Or fierce leaders of robber hordes, their families scattered in a few poor villages! Kingdoms! They talk of joining together to resist Assyria; the great empire of Assyria. Hopeless folly! They are jealous and suspicious of each other. They will never hold together long enough to win. Assyria can easily crush them one by one.

CHAMBERLAIN. Could not Jerusalem lead them to

victory, O King? With thee and Prince Ahaz. . . .

JOTHAM. Nay, they would forsake us at the first onset. We are safer if we do not meddle. We must keep out of their plots, or we shall be swallowed up too.

CHAMBERLAIN. Some of your lords, who are learned in statecraft—the friends of Prince Ahaz—say that Egypt would help us against Assyria.

ISAIAH. Say rather lords that are learned in mischief! Help from Egypt! That blusterer-that-stays-at-home! Egypt promises greatly, but never gives any help. If Egypt can stir up the little kingdoms to revolt, she thinks the Assyrian armies will be weakened in subduing them before reaching Egypt. These petty kings are between the tiger and the crocodile. [*Turns to ELKANAH.*] Didst thou see any Egyptians, Elkanah, among the children of Ammon? Some of their spies are usually stirring up such revolts.

ELKANAH. Yea, my lord, I saw Egyptian merchants among the Ammonites. I know not if they were spies. [*To the KING.*] An Egyptian caravan entered Jerusalem this morning.

ISAIAH. This morning! My Lord Jotham, I would see these Egyptian merchants. [*KING bows; ISAAH leaves.*]

ELKANAH. My lord, O King, I sent one of my captains to guard the caravan so long as they stay in the city.

JOTHAM. Thou art a faithful servant, Elkanah. Thou hast the wisdom of a great captain. [*Taking off his necklace.*] Wear this royal necklace in token of the King's pleasure. [*KING rises. CHAMBERLAIN officiously offers to convey it, but ELKANAH comes a step forward and bows, KING puts necklace over his head.*]

ELKANAH. I am thy servant, O King, I and my whole house forever.

JOTHAM. Didst thou visit my high towers * in the forest, on thy journey?

ELKANAH. I crossed the threshold of every tower that thou didst build upon the borders of Ammon. They are strong, O King, and the doors are of hewn oak bound with bands and hinges of iron.

JOTHAM. The watchmen had not forsaken them?

ELKANAH. Nay, my lord. The full tale of men was in every place. But they are not trained warriors, my Lord King. They are frontiersmen, shepherds, wandering farmers. They are brave and loyal tribesmen, but undisciplined. They wander into the woods to gather firewood, or hunt game, or find stray cattle, and they leave no watchman at the tower.

JOTHAM. But they are the best we have.

ELKANAH. Yea, my lord. The best and bravest. We have no men that are trustworthy after this manner. It would take years of constant training and

* Jotham built strongholds, high towers in the forest, probably in Gilead and in Ammon across the Jordan. II Chronicles 27:4.

severe experience to make men fit for garrison captains.

JOTHAM. Thou speakest truly, Elkanah. And then they would scarcely be fit for anything else. We must hope for safety.

CHAMBERLAIN [*who has gone to the door, announces*]. The Prince Ahaz and his wife, Abijah.

JOTHAM [*nods*]. The damsel has a son, Elkanah; therefore she comes into the King's court that we may rejoice with her. [*Rises.*]

AHAZ [*conducts ABIJAH rather pompously to the KING*]. O King, live forever.

ABIJAH [*kneeling*]. Thy countenance is the life of thine handmaiden.

JOTHAM. The Lord bless thee, daughter; and strengthen thy heart; and make thee wise as the mother of kings.

[*AHAZ and ABIJAH go up rear center.*]

CHAMBERLAIN. Ambassadors from Damascus, my Lord King.

[*KING nods, everybody looks inquiringly and there is a buzz of conversation.*]

AMBASSADORS [*conducted by CHAMBERLAIN come to center*]. Peace to thy house, my Lord Jotham, King of Judah. Thy brother Rezin, King of Aram, sendeth greeting from Damascus. [*They hand letter to the KING.*]

JOTHAM. Peace to your master and his servants. [*Breaks seal and unrolls letter.*] What tidings do ye bear?

FIRST AMBASSADOR. Tiglath-Pileser, the King of Assyria, doth lift his hand against all of the Kings of this land to smite them one by one, them and their people. Therefore saith my master, Rezin, the King of Arram . . . [*A deep bow.*]

SECOND AMBASSADOR. And my master Pehahiah, King of Israel . . . [*A deep bow.*]

FIRST AMBASSADOR. Let my people and thy people stand together against the King of Assyria.

SECOND AMBASSADOR. And so shall we cease from being his servants.

[*As JOTHAM does not immediately answer, AHAZ after a pause speaks.*]

AHAZ. Surely the King will join against the Assyrian invader.

JOTHAM. The King will speak nothing until he inquire of his wise men, and of Jehovah the God of Judah. [*To ambassadors.*] But ye are the servants of my brethren, the Kings of Israel and Damascus; behold, Azrikam, the King's chamberlain, will lodge you, and set meat before you, and send you forth with peace. [*Ambassadors bow to AZRIKAM, who repeatedly bows low, as he retires backwards. Near the door the ambassadors turn and make profound final bows to the KING.*]

AHAZ. Why dost thou tarry, my father? Surely thy wise men will counsel thee to make preparation with the Kings of the land.

JOTHAM. Alas, my son, the wise men in every nation have sold themselves to make war. For their

hearts are set upon gold, and feasting, and fine raiment; so they are afraid when tidings cometh. Only the men whose heart Jehovah stayeth upon righteousness have courage enough for peace.

AHAZ. That sounds like the prophet Isaiah, not like a mighty king.

JOTHAM. My son, none of these kings is mightier than Isaiah. For behold he carrieth his soul in his own hand, and the peace of God is in his heart. And every man knoweth that he speaketh from the Lord Jehovah. The prophet Isaiah is a tower of strength to the house of thy fathers. Give heed, my son, to thine uncle Isaiah. With him there is strength, the strength of the God of Heaven.

AHAZ. But this is a question for practical men. Captains that have experience in war, and statesmen that know how to deal with foreign peoples.

JOTHAM. Foreign peoples, my son, are like unto our own people. The hearts of strangers are like unto our own hearts. Wise men, everywhere, are they that deal uprightly; that have the same balances for their own goods and the stranger's. This new King of Assyria is a man of war, and would take cities and peoples with an outstretched hand. Therefore the hearts of men tremble like leaves in the wind. But these treacherous chiefs of our father's enemies that surround us on every side —no man can trust them.

AHAZ. They all hate Assyria. Surely they will all fight against the oppressor.

JOTHAM. Nay, that is by no means certain, my son.

No league is sure that is founded upon hate or fear. Remember that. But even if they all did join together, they would not be strong. At the first onset they would crumble apart. One army of five thousand, under one captain, were worth ten separate armies of a thousand each. Nay, my son, these are broken reeds. If you lean on them, they will pierce your hand. [*To the CHAMBERLAIN.*] Azrikam, command the scribe to return answer [*handing him the letter*] that Jotham, King of Judah, will not join the revolt against Assyria.

AHAZ. But, my father, what shall we do when the Assyrian comes?

JOTHAM. Put thy trust in Jehovah, and he will protect thee. [*AHAZ makes an impatient gesture.*] Is not Jerusalem like an eagle's crag? afar from the path of the warrior? Assyria will war against Egypt, and heap up great treasure. Let us sit on our nest in silence and watch his armies march past through Philistia.

AHAZ. But suppose he turns aside to fight us?

JOTHAM. Will a man take his life in his hand and clamber up a steep crag for a handful of eggs and moulted feathers? Behold the Assyrian will pass us by, and we shall suffer no hurt. But these Kings of Ephraim and Damascus, of Edom and Philistia, of Sidon and Moab and Ammon—their hearts are like the surge of the sea tossed to and fro by the wind. They cannot conquer any army. But

they will make raids upon our borders. We must look to our fortresses on the border of Samaria and Edom and across the Jordan.

AHAZ. Let me go and examine the hill towers and the defences thereof.

JOTHAM. Nay, thou art but a youth, and these that come against us are seasoned men of war; skilled in all the craft of warfare. [*Considers intently.*] Thou couldst go with Jozabad, the captain of the King's horsemen. Eh?

AHAZ. Nay, my father. Who is Jozabad, to command the King's son?

JOTHAM. My son, he is a man of war, trained from his youth. He could teach thee to set the battle in array.

AHAZ. But I don't want to be taught. I want to have full charge of the matter. I am no longer a child.

JOTHAM [*hiding his disappointment with a kind manner*]. Nay, my son, thou art the heir of the kingdom. But behold, thy father, all his days, has been a learner from lesser men. What says the proverb:

"The wise will rise up before the hoary head,
And hearken to the man of understanding."

What sayest thou, Elkanah?

ELKANAH. If it please my lord, let the young man remain here with thee, to take counsel with the King in all the works that we make for the defence of the kingdom. And if it seem good to thee,

send Jozabad, I pray thee, toward the border of Edom, and I will strengthen Mizpah and Hazor, and Ramath and Anathoth.

JOTHAM. Thou shalt go. Command Jozabad also that he make haste. [ELKANAH bows and goes out.]

AHAZ. Now, my lord, I pray thee, let thy son speak. If I stay here in Jerusalem, will not the people say, "Ahaz is afraid"? Send me, I pray thee, across the Jordan, that I may examine the high towers that thou hast caused to be built in the forest. Elkanah hath told thee they are strong. Let me follow in his steps and the people will say, "The King's son doth keep a watchful eye over the King's captains." So shall glory and homage be to the King's son.

JOTHAM. Take unto thee some of the King's guard and a troop of horsemen, and go as thou sayest, and come again in haste. [AHAZ goes toward door.]

JERUSHA [to ABIJAH]. Wilt thou go with thy lord to nourish him with new bread?

ABIJAH [agitated]. But what shall I do with . . . with the child?

JOTHAM. Let the damsel remain in the palace with her little son. Ahaz can take one of his concubines to make his bread and comfort him.

ABIJAH [to AHAZ]. O my lord, let me not leave thee. Let me prepare thy food and wait upon my lord, and these. [Glances at LEAH and HULDAH.]

AHAZ [*gently rejects her request*]. Huldah shall go with me, and serve me.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

A month later.

[QUEEN JERUSHA *on dais with her women about her*, JORAH, LEAH, NANEA, ZILTHAI. AZRIKAM, *the LORD CHAMBERLAIN, down left center.*]

QUEEN-MOTHER. But why should Ahaz flee, if no enemy is drawn up in battle array?

JORAH. I know not, O Queen of the morning. The messenger said the Prince fled alone without taking any guard, and they were panic-stricken lest evil befall the Prince before they could overtake him and protect him.

QUEEN-MOTHER. Call it not flight. Let none say he fled. The prank of a foolish lad. He is but a child still. Would that he were wiser!

ABIJAH [*leaning over balcony, turns excitedly and runs in*]. He comes, he comes. My lord is here. [*She runs to one and another.*] He is dismounting from the white horse. O Mother of Kings, I am so happy that he has come again safe. [*She falls half-kneeling at feet of the QUEEN, remaining there till AHAZ is announced. QUEEN caresses her hair.*]

AZRIKAM. The Prince cometh, Ahaz the son of Jotham. [*AHAZ enters a few steps, stops and bows to the QUEEN.*]

ABIJAH [*running to him*]. Oh, my lord! [*He embraces and kisses her.*]

WOMEN. My Lord Ahaz!

Let my lord live!

AHAZ. Well, my star of the evening! Thine eyes are deeper than the waters of the Jordan, and thy lips are sweeter than wafers and wild honey. [*Looks at her in admiration, and kisses her again.*]

ABIJAH [*crooning*]. My lord! My own lord! . . . [*Starts.*] Oh, aren't you dying to see the baby? He's grown so big.

AHAZ. What, in one month?

ABIJAH. And he can laugh, already, oh, so sweet!

[*They have by this time gotten to the dais, and AHAZ kneels before his grandmother, takes her face in his hands and kisses her twice.*]

ABIJAH. He doesn't believe the baby can smile, grandmother.

AHAZ [*rising*]. Where is my father, Azrikam?

AZRIKAM [*raises AHAZ's hand and places it upon his own bowed head; AHAZ pats his shoulder familiarly*]. We fear that the Edomites are planning an attack. So the King went yester morn to the border of Edom to see one of the hill towers. Joash built the doorway with one of these new-fashioned arches, so it had to be done over again. I told him it would, but . . . [*with a shrug*]

these young fellows, they know everything.
AHAZ. And where is Elkanah?

AURIKAM. My Lord Elkanah is at Mizpah where he is very much needed to hold back the Philistines. He is building a gigantic catapult to throw great stones upon any army that comes up the road through the pass. [*Sees guard talking, goes to door, stops and turns to AHAZ.*] It is a terrible invention, my lord.

[AHAZ sits beside JERUSHA on dais.]

AZRIKAM. A messenger from my Lord Elkanah.
[*Conducting him to dais.*]

AHAZ [*bows*]. Comest thou with peace on thy lips?

HOSAH. To my lord, peace. Elkanah bade me say that Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria and Sulymon of Moab are confederated with Sidon and Ammon and Edom and the Philistines to kill King Jotham and set the son of Tabeel upon the throne of Judah. Then all the kingdoms will join to fight against Assyria.

AHAZ. All these Kings are confederated in this conspiracy, against my father! Who is this son of Tabeel that they would set upon our throne? If they kill my father, I will be on the throne of Judah. Did Elkanah bid thee speak more words?

HOSAH [*nods*]. Jekah hath laid siege to Beth-horon.

AHAZ. Beth-horon! Why, they are almost at our doors! [*Rises, goes left.*] Send for my father, quick, somebody. Azrikam, you. [*Turns right.*] Where is Elkanah and his army?

HOSAH. He is at Mizpah. Thence he flies down to sting the men of Ephraim that encompass Beth-horon. Or on the Philistines that have captured Ajalon and Beth-shemesh. Every night he falls upon some of their tents, and cuts them off with the sword of Judah.

AZRIKAM [*hurries in*]. O my Lord Ahaz, King Jotham is dead!

AHAZ. Dead! My father dead! It cannot be! [*Turns to GRANDMOTHER, helpless.*] What shall we do?

JERUSHA [*rises*]. The King dead? My son Jotham?

AZRIKAM [*nods*]. They have brought him to the gate of the city. [*ABIJAH and ZILTHAI slip to balcony.*]

JERUSHA [*going*]. I will go to receive the body of my son. [*Turns at door, with gesture to AHAZ standing lost in thought, center. She speaks in a restrained tone, as if recalling AHAZ to his public duty.*] Long live the King. [*All bow to him. AZRIKAM bows and leads him to dais, then goes out after the QUEEN-MOTHER.*]

VOICES. Long live the King!

[*For a few moments AHAZ is pleased. Soon realizes the danger and his own incompetence. Sees HOSAH still standing center.*]

AHAZ [*to HOSAH*]. Have you more tidings?

HOSAH [*nods*]. Rezin of Damascus has marched down the east side of the Jordan, through Ammon and Moab to stir up Edom against you.

AZRIKAM [*breaking in, indicating man outside*

door]. That messenger says they have captured Elath, the port of ships. [*To HOSAH.*] Is that true? [*HOSAH nods.*]

AHAZ. What messenger?

AZRIKAM. The one that came with your father, my lord.

AHAZ. Bring him in. [*To guard.*] You, bring him, quick. [*Guard disappears.*] Elath! Where is Elath?

AZRIKAM [*importantly*]. Elath, my Lord King, is the haven of your ships on the Red Sea. [*To messenger.*] They have captured it again, have they? [*Messenger bows.*] Well, of course, it belongs to them. It has always been a horrible expense to us, and infinite nuisance. But when we don't have it the Edomites charge us scandalous prices for spices from India and jewels from Ophir and perfumes from Arabia. It will be hard to live with the ladies of the court, my lad, uh . . . my lord . . . my Lord King. The ladies depend so much upon spices and . . . perfumes. [*ABIJAH pulls his robe. He starts in alarm. Continues, backing off.*] Especially in time of war, I mean, when water is too scarce to wash in.

[*AZRIKAM goes to door, conducts messenger to dais. Guard returns.*]

AHAZ. Have you tidings from Edom?

SETHUR. The Edomites have arisen all along our border and driven much people into captivity.

AZRIKAM. Woe, woe unto Edom!

SETHUR. The Philistines have captured Socoh, and Beth-shemesh and Ajalon, and are besieging Timnah.

AHAZ. Almost at our gates! What shall we do? What shall we do? Tell Urijah the priest to offer a thousand rams to Jehovah for his protection.
[HOSAH goes.]

ABIJAH. O my lord, make also an offering to Moloch and the gods of the lands round about, to save us from the fierce hatred of the children of Ammon.

AHAZ. Yes, let them sacrifice a thousand. . . .

AZRIKAM. The offering to Moloch must needs be a son.

AHAZ. A son! Can I . . . can I sacrifice a son?

ABIJAH. Oh! a son! a son of the King? [AZRIKAM nods.]

ABIJAH [*gasps with fear, clasps hands nervously as she thinks of her baby; a sudden thought and she comes near him*]. My lord could offer the son of thy concubine, Zilthai. Is she not a daughter of the children of Ammon?

ZILTHAI. [*Sees ABIJAH's glance at her, and gasps, takes a deep breath, clasps her hands intensely in wild-eyed terror. She thinks of running to the door, takes a few steps, but the guard is there. She turns to balcony; the guard there moves. She drops center.*] O my lord, my son? Not my son!

AHAZ. [*Pale, clutching the arm of the throne nervously. Nods to AZRIKAM.*] Let them take her son.

[She stretches both hands toward him in supplication, but he is settled on it. She drops her head on floor, groaning.]

ZILTHAI. The son of thy handmaid, the King's own son!

[AHAZ nods to AZRIKAM who bows and goes out. ZILTHAI arouses herself, rises, runs to AZRIKAM, takes his elbows, evidently begs him for permission to go with him.]

ZILTHAI *[at door, still holding to AZRIKAM, turns to KING]*. O my Lord King, one word, only one word with my little son! before . . . before . . . *[They go out, everybody much disturbed and nervous.]*

AHAZ *[to SETHUR]*. Haste thee to the Mount of Olives and command the Moabitish priest to sacrifice three score oxen to Chemosh, his god. Peradventure he may help us to overcome the Edomites. And command the Sidonian priest there to make a great gift to appease Ashtoreth, that she save us from the Philistines. *[SETHUR goes out.]* Hasten! Hasten! Oh, what shall we do? Isn't there anything we can do? *[Throws himself on dais. Everybody nervous.]*

[The guard at door, looking around in vain for the KING's CHAMBERLAIN, announces the prophet ISAIAH.]

GUARD. My Lord Isaiah, the son of Amoz.

[ISAIAH enters quietly, composed, yet alert.]

AHAZ *[comes down from dais to him, wringing his*

hands]. Oh, uncle, have you heard? There's a conspiracy, a terrible conspiracy.

ISAIAH [*with dignified reproof*]. A conspiracy against the poor maiden of Ammon, and against thine own child . . . and against Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel. Thou hast betrayed innocent blood, to cast thine own son into the fire to Moloch, a sacrifice to the hideous god of the Ammonites. Is not Jehovah the God of Israel? Should we not make our sacrifices to him?

AHAZ. Yes, I know, I have sacrificed to Jehovah. But, uncle, there's a terrible conspiracy against me. Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria and the Philistines, and Ammon and Edom, they've all joined against us. What shall we do?

ISAIAH. Why is your heart trembling, as the trees of the forest quiver in the wind?

AHAZ. Oh, we'll all be slain. What shall we do? What shall we do?

ISAIAH. Be watchful and wait. Keep your eyes open, and your heart quiet. You need not be frantic at the fierce sputterings of Rezin and the son of Remaliah. They are tails of smoking firebrands, almost extinct.

AHAZ. But they are conquering everything, everywhere.

ISAIAH. Who are they to affright a King that trusts in Jehovah?

AHAZ. But . . . but . . . hadn't we better sacrifice to the other gods also? just for safety?

ISAIAH. Safety! Jehovah is safety. Hold fast to him.
If you do not hold fast, you cannot stand fast.
The Lord Jehovah is our rock and our fortress.

[*Reënter AZRIKAM.*]

AHAZ. But we'd better make sure. I'll sacrifice a great offering to Chemosh and Moloch on . . . on Solomon's altars. But where can we find an altar to Rimmon, the god of Damascus?

ISAIAH [*indignant*]. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I have laid in Zion a foundation stone. He that believeth shall not be tossed about like the foam on the waves of the sea.

AHAZ [*goes toward AZRIKAM; gives him hurried directions; AZRIKAM goes out*]. But this conspiracy! They have almost reached Jerusalem.

ISAIAH. Their conspiracy shall not stand. Neither shall their devices come to pass. For the head of Damascus is . . . Rezin, and the head of Samaria is . . . the son of Remaliah. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.

AHAZ. Thou hast spoken the words of wisdom unto thy son. As thou sayest we will do.

ISAIAH. Hath not Jehovah promised a Deliverer for his people?

"Behold a son shall be born unto the house of David. He shall rule in righteousness. He shall judge among the nations."

ABIJAH [*kneels to ISAIAH*]. My Lord Isaiah, of whom doth the oracle speak? I . . . I . . . thine

handmaiden hath a son. . . . Who is this son?

ISAIAH. No man knoweth his name. But some day he will come. In that day shall the sprout of Jehovah's planting be beautiful and glorious. [*No longer to her, but rapt.*] For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God-Hero, Father Everlasting, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, and of peace, there shall be no end; to establish the throne of David, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever.

[*ISAIAH's mind has soared far away. He looks up, stretches up his hand. At close, folds hands upon breast, bows his head as his voice melts into silence.*]

ABIJAH [*touching his hem with awe*]. Will some damsel in Judah be the mother of this son?

ISAIAH. Yea, and blessed shall she be among the daughters of Jerusalem. She shall be a tower of strength in the day of Jehovah; a fountain of health unto all people.

[*ISAIAH goes toward balcony during this speech. Looks down, suddenly starts.*]

ISAIAH. Ha! What means this tumult? Gold vessels! . . . the sacred vessels from the Temple! Where are they taking them? The King's horsemen . . . [*Turns suddenly to AHAZ, who cowers under his glance. Scornfully, as to himself:*] Ah, children

that deal corruptly! Woe unto the people whose ruler is a child. [*Comes forward.*] You have forsaken Jehovah. You have despised the Holy One of Israel, in your heartless fear. Why will you be smitten? [*Turns towards door.*] Jerusalem is ruined! Judah is fallen!

AHAZ [*abjectly*]. No, no, I am sending a present to Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, to . . . to ask him to come and help . . . to . . . to save me from the hand of Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria. [*AHAZ has followed ISAIAH and timidly touches his elbow.*]

ISAIAH [*without turning*]. Oh, my people, your princes are childish, and they that lead you swallow up the path for your feet.

AHAZ. What else could I do? We . . . we must do something.

ISAIAH. Do nothing without Jehovah. Keep out of political strategy. Wherefore should you give your kingdom into the hand of Assyria? Without your meddling he will come swiftly to chastise these conspiring Kings. Yea, before the new-born child shall learn to cry Da-da and Ma-ma, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away by the King of Assyria. A conspiracy indeed! Why should you tremble? Let them lay their heads together, their plans shall be brought to nought, for God is with us,—Immanu-el. Take sanctuary with the Lord of Jehovah, and he shall be your refuge.

AHAZ. Yea, my father. Thou hast the words of wisdom. We are sacrificing to Jehovah.

ISAIAH [*looks at him in scorn, turns towards balcony, then suddenly turns to AHAZ*]. Stop your ambassadors before it is too late. Let Assyria alone. You are making a covenant with hell. Will you not see? Can you not understand? Conquer your puny fright, and take courage in God. This is the word of Jehovah to you. [*Pauses; his appeal does not get beneath the KING's sickly simper.*] Jehovah will give you a sign to assure you that it is his message. What shall it be? Ask any sign you will. [*Takes a turn up and back.*]

AHAZ [*to AZRIKAM*]. Then I would be forced to follow his advice. [*Shaking his head.*] Nay, it is not practical. He knows nothing of statecraft. We should be destroyed. [*To ISAIAH, who has returned.*] Nay, my father, I will not make a test of Jehovah. That would be presumption. Nay, I will not ask any sign from him.

ISAIAH. Then why make this sacrifice to him, if you do not want an answer? [*Looks at him in pained silence, then turns hopelessly away. Stops at left center, and turns.*] Hearken to the word of Jehovah, O Prince of the house of David: You make brave men weary with your faithless fears. Is it a small thing that you are wearying out the patience of God also? You shirk a sign; you dare not face the truth. Now God will give you a sign you cannot escape from. The destiny of your na-

tion is in your hands. Look down the future. The favored maiden is with child. She beareth a son—Im-manu-el. [*With a hopeful enthusiasm.*] Arise, shine, for thy Light has come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. [*Drops into discouraged regret.*] But nay, the splendor of his kingdom Ahaz has destroyed. All the glory and power that God promised to his people, Ahaz has given to Assyria. Instead of his glorious inheritance, the Prince—Im-manu-el—when he comes, shall be clothed with desolation. Ahaz has thrown his heritage away. The Prince is a poor refugee with nothing to eat but wild honey and clotted milk. Before he has grown from childhood, God will bring upon thee and upon thy people . . . the terrible sword of Assyria.

AHAZ [*gasps*]. Assyria? But Assyria will help us! . . .

ISALAH. Aye, help you into the grave!

[*The diminishing tramp of horses and the far off trumpet-calls indicate that the Embassy has gone.*]

ISALAH [*listens a moment, then speaks with a grim smile which changes to terrible awe, and the slow majesty of doom*]. Can you stop your messengers? [*AHAZ stands abject but stubborn.*] They are gone! . . . And Assyria will come. Behold, they shall come, swiftly. None of them shall be weary or stumble. [*Some women drop on floor, wring*

hands.] Their arrows are sharp, the hoofs of their horses like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. [ABIJAH, center, drops on floor, then forehead on floor, prostrate.] They shall roar like young lions leaping on their prey, and there shall be none to deliver. [JERUSHA turns up, stretches hands above head, throws head back in despairing supplication to heaven. Holds this position till curtain. Slow climax to his terrible vision.] The light is darkened! The mountains tremble! Dead bodies strewn like refuse in the streets! The terrible moaning of the lonely sea! The empty silence of the dead! If you will not trust Jehovah, surely you cannot be safe. [AHAZ is seated on edge of throne, clutching its arms with both hands, mouth drops open helpless, his eyes pitiful in terror. ISAIAH turns from him with an exclamation half prayer and half soliloquy.] Except Jehovah leave us a very small remnant, we shall be as Sodom; like unto Gomorrah. Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

CURTAIN

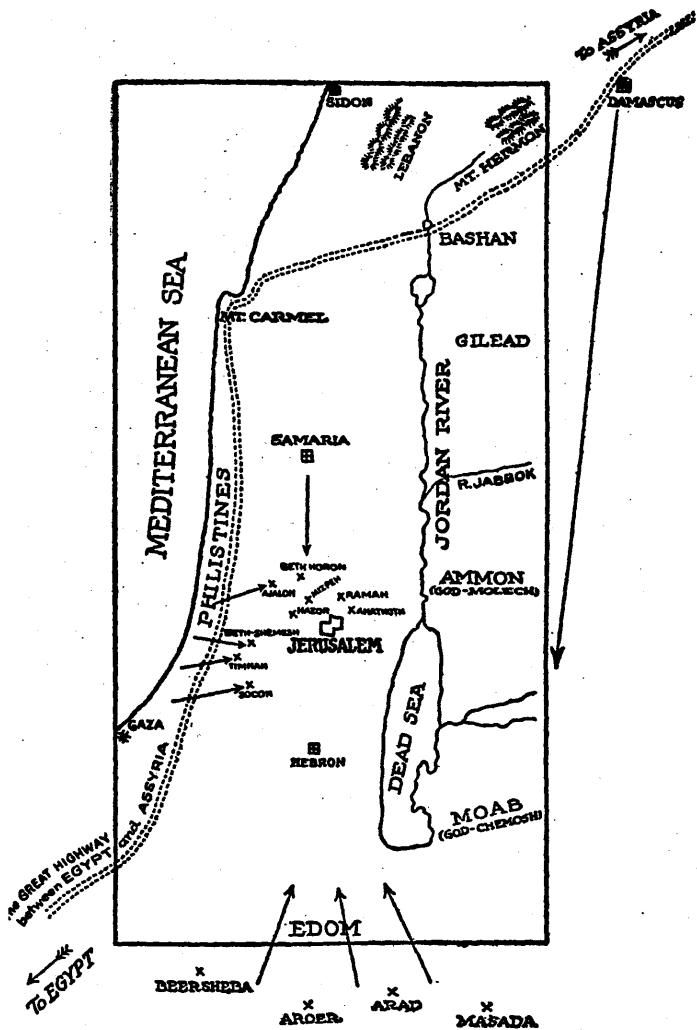
Let us reread this play with special reference to its expression of the feelings of the various persons concerned.

There is evident pleasure when Elkanah brings

the good news that the tribute is paid. Prince Ahaz is happy over the birth of Abijah's son. There is anxiety about the new and warlike king of Assyria, petulance in Ahaz, mingled with pride. In Abijah jealousy of the Prince's concubines with anxiety for her baby is mingled with some real affection for her husband. This shows more strongly on his return, in their caresses and talk about the baby.

As a foil for the intenser emotion in the latter part, Azrikam's egotism supplies the element of fun. He must be played as a self-important and rather fussy old man. Then comes the sudden shock of the King's death, the anxiety, hesitation and nervous fear of Ahaz, agitated by the tidings of attack. His frantic efforts to appease the various gods, the pang of the concubine's grief over the hideous sacrifice of her baby, prepares us for the effort of Isaiah to steady the puny king. The calm confidence of the prophet is emphasized by the nervous cringing of Ahaz. Scorn for his cowardice, his duplicity, his betrayal of the people he might have saved gives way to awe at Isaiah's majestic and solemn prediction.

The following play may be read first to get the situation: The sepulcher, the women wrapping the body, the efficient guard of Roman soldiers, the watchful Pharisees, the hopelessness of the disciples, emphasized by the anxious remorse of Judas Iscariot, the earthquake, the strange report of Mary and



Map showing the inroads of Jotham's enemies

Joanna, seconded by the experience of Peter, the mystery of the linen cloths left empty upon the stone slab, the significance of it all expressed by the angel standing in the doorway of the tomb, and the sudden flash of understanding that comes to the heart of Mary Magdelene.

If we can put ourselves back in this situation almost every fact will stir some emotion. The rise of the curtain shows a tomb in the dusk of evening. The disciples are half concealing themselves. They speak in low tones. They are evidently troubled. The scene begins in a mood of depression and apprehension. As a relief and contrast there are relaxation and enjoyment in the arrogant soldier's discomfiting the haughty Pharisees. The tension increases with the anxious remorse of Judas and the complete darkness.

The dawning light and the open tomb excite hope. Expectation is aroused by the hurried entrance of John and Peter, and Peter's vision renews confidence, but the mood is awesome rather than triumphant. Nothing must come in to dissipate that. The mysterious presence of the linen cloths should increase it. Instead of closing with hilarious joy at the great discovery of Christ's triumph over the grave, let it be announced by an authoritative person, the angel. Then bring the scene back to more personal emotion by the Voice that gives no explanation or proofs, but gives complete assurance to Mary through her understanding heart.

THE STONE ROLLED AWAY

The narrow low doorway of a tomb is seen at the rear, left of center. The circular door, like an enormous grindstone at right of center. To the left of the doorway, sitting on a large rock, a Roman soldier. Within the tomb almost dark, can be seen a slab with a human form upon it wrapped in linen (not too white; gray is better). Women are moving about wrapping it with spices. A layer of spices is laid next the skin, then a wide strip of linen continuously wound around.

Another soldier walks across back and forth, down stage. Nathanael, Didymus and Nicolas (from their dress evidently not wealthy aristocrats) converse in low tones, down right, in the shelter of a clump of bushes. Some Pharisees, in long robes, are eagerly watching, down left, peering around a rock. One of the women inside the tomb is seen to move across the doorway.

NATHANAEL. That looked like his mother. Is she in there?

DIDYMUS. No, she's not there. John took her home before the body was lowered. That was probably her sister. She came with us from the cross when we brought the body to the tomb.

NICOLAS. Will the women finish wrapping the body before dark? They can scarcely see to work now.

DIDYMUS. It would not be safe for women to be here after dark with these brutal soldiers. We could never protect them. And the judges never listen when a Jew accuses a Roman.

NATHANAEL. These auxiliary soldiers are not Romans. They are Franks, and Gauls and Britons and—

DIDYMUS. No, but they are in the Roman army. It's just the same.

NICOLAS [*looking around at the sky*]. Had we better call the women? [*Hesitation.*]

NATHANAEL. I wonder if they have nearly done. Can you see?

DIDYMUS. No, I can just see them moving. But they can't have finished yet, for Rabbi Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. It will take a long time to wrap all that. [*It has been gradually growing darker.*]

NICOLAS. Do you suppose the soldiers would let them use a lamp if I go and bring one?

NATHANAEL. They would probably blow it out. But they haven't bothered them yet. You might get one and try. [*NICOLAS goes out right.*]

FIRST PHARISEE. Hark, I thought I heard footsteps! [*They listen.*] You know what Annas says? His disciples are planning to steal him.

SECOND PHARISEE. That is just his imagination. Annas is getting old. I don't believe they have any intention of stealing him away. How could they?

FIRST PHARISEE. Well they might, you know. You

never can tell. Do you see those men over yonder? What are they loitering about for?

SECOND PHARISEE. Why, they are waiting for their womenfolks, of course. They are not scheming to steal the body. How could they? Those women could never carry out a dead body without our seeing it. And look at that soldier, right at the door—and this other sentinel. None of these men has gone within fifty paces of the sepulcher. That is doubtless the centurion's command. There are thirty soldiers around here guarding the knoll and this little garden. They are watching us all closely. You couldn't lift a finger without their noticing it.

FIRST PHARISEE. Here comes one of them now. Foreign beast!

FIRST SOLDIER [to PHARISEES]. Better clear out now, while it's light enough to walk by. If it gets much darker, you'll stub your precious toes. Besides, soon as ye 'ear that trumpet it'll be your 'oly Sabbath, and then what? Just clear out—if you—please. [*With mocking bow, he jabs at them with spear.*]

FIRST PHARISEE [*aghast at his disrespect*]. But we're—we're—we're—

FIRST SOLDIER. You'll be wearier yet if you don't move along. Humph! I'm not going to have anybody sneaking around here after dark, see? Our orders is sharp. "Take no chances of them stealing the body."

SECOND PHARISEE. We're not going to steal the body; we—

FIRST SOLDIER. No, you're not. I'll give ye my word on that. You're going to clear out right off. Orders is orders, ye know. So, if we see anybody around here after it begins to darken, we runs a spear through his innards, see? That's the way *we* opens up a subject, your royal 'ighness. Ha, ha, ha. Ye better move along.

FIRST PHARISEE. Why, man, we're not his disciples. We brought him to the governor.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, the governor wouldn't thank ye very 'eartily for that, eh? Bothering him with your spite! What ye hanging around 'ere for anyhow? Afraid he wasn't properly executed, eh? Poor fellow! I suppose he wasn't in your class. Well, you've 'ad your way with him. Go on 'ome and shake 'ands with yourself, or we'll take *you* to the governor this time, your 'oly lordship. [*The PHARISEES go out, down left, grumbling.*]

FIRST PHARISEE. What indignity! to be flouted by these accursed soldiers!

SECOND PHARISEE. Contemptible scum of Rome!

[*JUDAS emerges from shrub, up left, and approaches soldier.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Another jackrabbit! Must be one be'ind every bush! Well, what'll ye 'ave?

JUDAS. Is—is he surely dead?

FIRST SOLDIER. Dead! 'im in there? [*Jerking thumb over shoulder.*] Course he's dead. Ain't this a

grave? Didn't think it was an 'orspital, did ye?

JUDAS [*giving him a coin as large as a dollar*]. I'll give you this silver piece if you'll go in there and make sure. Feel him. Feel his skin. Maybe he isn't really dead, you know. [*With anguish.*] He—he can't be. He—

FIRST SOLDIER. Can't be? You think a man can live after he has had one of them [*showing spear*] pushed into him? Huh! Hand us your money, and I'll go in and see. [*After a few steps he stops and calls over his shoulder.*] Want to see for yourself? Come on in.

JUDAS [*goes a few steps and then suddenly stops*]. Is there anybody in there with him?

FIRST SOLDIER. Only some women.

JUDAS [*shrinks back*]. No, I can't go— Maybe it's— Maybe it's Mary his mother. I can't—

FIRST SOLDIER. Come on.

JUDAS. No, I can't—I don't want to go. You go—you make sure—sure.

[*SOLDIER goes in. JUDAS shrinks back as a woman comes out quickly. She comes down right, to NATHANAEL and DIDYMUS. She looks back at tomb longingly, then goes out, right.*]

JUDAS [*down left*]. That isn't his mother. I wish I knew whether she *is* in there.

DIDYMUS [*down right*]. Why, Nathanael, look—I believe—see there. Isn't that Judas? What is he doing here, I wonder.

NATHANAEL. I'll ask him. [*JUDAS sees him coming and goes out quickly, left.*]

FIRST SOLDIER [*comes out, looks around for JUDAS*].

Well, where is that boneskull that wanted to know if he was dead?—If he isn't gone without—well, I've got his silver. [*Fondling it.*] That hasn't run away. [*Blissfully.*] I can get drunk tomorrow.

SECOND SOLDIER [*to those inside the tomb*]. First trumpet has just blown. We're going to close up this door now. I suppose you'd rather be on the outside.

[*Two women come out, join NATHANAEL and DIDYMUS, wait till the soldiers roll the door in front of the doorway and seal the stone, then as soldiers turn front again, all four go out quickly, right. Blue lights dim down to total darkness, then raise red, then amber or white. Stage is empty except for a soldier seated on a rock, leaning back against tomb, right of doorway. He is dead, but at a distance he must look as if on guard. Spear standing up against his shoulder, arm around it, hand in lap.*]

JOHN [*hastens in from lower right corner, suddenly stops*]. The tomb is open, the stone is rolled away!

PETER [*off stage*]. Wait, John, I'm out of breath. Hold on a minute.

[*JOHN has cautiously gone up to door. Peers in, apparently cannot see clearly, comes down front again as PETER enters.*]

PETER. The door is open?

JOHN. Aye, it is certainly open. Mary is so excitable that I thought she might have imagined it. But Joanna is never credulous, and she says she saw it too.

PETER. Why, John, this soldier is dead!

JOHN. Dead! [*Examining him.*] So he is. Must have been the earthquake the women spoke of. [*JOHN peers into the tomb.*]

PETER. Can you see anything?

JOHN. No,—yes—I think I can see the body.

PETER. Well, I'm going in to find out. [*JOHN stops him.*]

JOHN. Simon, it couldn't be. It's impossible.

PETER. John, I had a strange vision. After I denied him and then saw him looking at me so sorrowfully I ran—and—stumbled—and—ran all night. Whenever I stopped his eyes seemed to be looking right into me. In the morning, I found Judas, dead, below the potter's cliff where he had hanged himself. Then I couldn't get that horrible sight out of my mind. All day it haunted me, and at night some devil seemed to be whispering, "You denied him. You're no better than Judas. You'd better kill yourself, too." Oh, it was awful—awful. And then he came and touched me, and smiled and—John, I'm going in. [*PETER goes into the tomb.*]

JOHN. Here come the women again. [*JOHN follows PETER.*]

[*Enter MARIAMNE, SALOME, JOANNA. The*

three go beyond the shelter of the bushes cautiously.]

JOANNA. Here they come. [*As PETER and JOHN emerge from the tomb. The women retreat to the bush, right.*]

JOHN. The body is gone—but— What did you see in there, Mariamne? You looked in, didn't you?

MARIAMNE. Yes, It was still dark inside, but we could make out the body all wrapped up, lying on the stone slab just as we left it. Only instead of being rounded—for we wrapped it tight—it seemed to have fallen in. [*JOHN gasps with astonished awe.*] It had flattened down a little. When Salome touched it she screamed. It frightened us. [*NATHANAEL and NICOLAS enter unnoticed and stand listening.*]

JOHN. Frightened you? Why—did it—frighten you?

MARIAMNE. John, there was nothing inside the wrapping—except the spices. That is why it had flattened down a little.

NATHANAEL. You mean the wrappings were—were not unwound?

MARIAMNE [*speechless, nods*]. Not unwound.

JOANNA. No one had touched them. They were just as we left them. But there was nothing inside. The body was gone. It had—evaporated. [*NATHANAEL and NICOLAS are incredulous.*]

JOHN. She is right. That is just the way the cloths are lying now.

MARIAMNE [*nods*]. The head-cloth was what I saw first. It was a hand-breath away from the other, just at the end of the slab. We had rolled it around the forehead, you know, and there it was, standing up in a flattened ring, just ready to fall flat if anybody touched it. As soon as I saw it, I knew what had happened.

JOHN. The Lord is risen indeed!

PETER. Aye, the Lord is risen and hath appeared even unto—Simon. [*Bows head and lays hand on breast.*] The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his servant, Jesus, and raised him from the dead.

ANGEL [*appears at door of tomb*]. He is the stone which was set at nought of the builders. And he is become the headstone of the corner. He is on the right hand of God. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

[*The group is center right and center left. All turn and gaze at the angel. They kneel when the angel says, "He is on the right hand of God."*]

NICOLAS. And me thinking he was just a carpenter!

NATHANAEL. I always felt he was more than that—but—this is wonderful.

MARY [*enters wearily, down right; she does not go far enough towards center to notice the others*]. Oh, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

A VOICE [*off right*]. Daughter! Why weepest thou?

MARY [*turns right, eagerly*]. Oh, are you the keeper of this garden? If you have borne away the body, tell me where it is, and I will take it away, sir.
[*Drops head and eyes down.*]

A VOICE [*off right*]. Mary.

MARY [*looks up startled, recognizes HIM*]. Rabboni! [*Falls on knees.*] O my dear, dear Master! [*After pause, rises, faces front.*] He is risen! He is the Lord of life. What was it he said once? "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

CURTAIN

CHAPTER SEVEN

STAGE, SCENERY, SETTING

Bible plays are sometimes given in the Sunday-school room and sometimes on the platform of the church itself. For those directors fortunate enough to have adequate stage equipment in the Sunday-school, no advice is needed. Usually, however, it is difficult to stage a Bible play if you seek the realistic setting possible in a theater. But in most plays that is not at all necessary.

There are plays that can be played before the very altar without shocking the most ritualistic or sacerdotal worshipper. Such were the original mystery plays of the Middle Ages. These presented, partly in dramatic and partly in symbolic form, the "mysteries" of the Christian faith: the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. If you have a beautiful stained-glass window as a background, or a significant reredos, or an alcove which is more or less a complete whole in itself and whose pillars and arches are architecturally beautiful, then the church itself is your best setting. Instead of drawing the mind away from the scene, such a setting focuses all the sacred associations

upon it. Then the presentation and the beholding become acts of worship.

The function of scenery is partly to assist the imagination of the audience by suggesting the time and place of the play. But its more important function is emotional; to suggest or to conserve the feelings incited by the situation and the players. In practice we are usually satisfied if the setting does not interfere with the feeling of the play. Its most important use is to shut out surroundings that might suggest the wrong environment, and clash with the emotion the play should arouse. Curtains of some unobtrusive color are the simplest device for this purpose. These can be thrown over screens, strung on wires or hung on rings from an iron pipe curved into a permanent cyclorama.

In general, the most artistic effects will be obtained if we use as little scenery, as few stage properties, as simple costumes as possible. If your show is frankly pictorial, a series of tableaux or "living pictures," it is of course permissible to concentrate the attention of the audience upon the dresses and the setting. But if it is really a play, in which situations are unfolded and character portrayed, then scenery and costumes must be subordinate, and not distract attention from the actions and words of the players.

A few cat-tails with their leaves, may suggest the banks of the Nile. A tree, even in a tub, may be Deborah's palm tree. If you play out of doors, the

infant Moses may be hidden in an overgrown mass of honeysuckle without exciting derision.

The line must be drawn at anything that would start the imagination in the wrong direction. Over-anxious attention to details of scenery and costume is more likely to do this than the absence of scenery.

The only indispensable part of the stage is the floor. It usually gets too little attention. The stage floor should be high enough above the floor of the auditorium for the audience to see everything the players do. This means at least as high as the back of a chair, which is about three feet. If the chairs are "staggered," that is, arranged like rows of shingles, each covering the space between those in front, it will help.

If the audience floor could slope down to the stage, it would be ideal, but as most churches must use the Sunday-school room, or gymnasium, or social room for their plays, we must probably be content with a level floor. In any case, keep the floor of the stage level. It may at first seem a happy idea to slope it down towards the audience, but that causes endless annoyance with scenery and furnishings. The stage floor should be of soft wood, to facilitate the use of stage screws in jacks, braces, etc.

The audience views the play through a large picture frame. The sides and top of this frame form the proscenium arch. The upper corners may be rounded or left square.

The width of the proscenium arch should, if at all possible, be at least twenty feet. The depth should be almost as great, but there should be considerable space "off-stage"; that is, behind the scenes, and on each side.

From the edge of the proscenium arch to the outer wall on each side, ten feet would not be too much. This gives room for screens, stage furniture, properties and actors. There should be a few feet left at the rear, so that actors can cross from one side to the other behind the scene.

If your building is narrow, you will have to use what space you can get. A stage less than twenty feet wide is uncomfortably crowded with a dozen individual players. But it is better to have the stage too small than to have no "off-stage" space.

The height of the proscenium opening should be at least ten feet. The arch should drop nearly a foot below the ceiling, so that a row of lights can be concealed behind it. The eyes of the audience must be protected from any glare from these.

CURTAIN

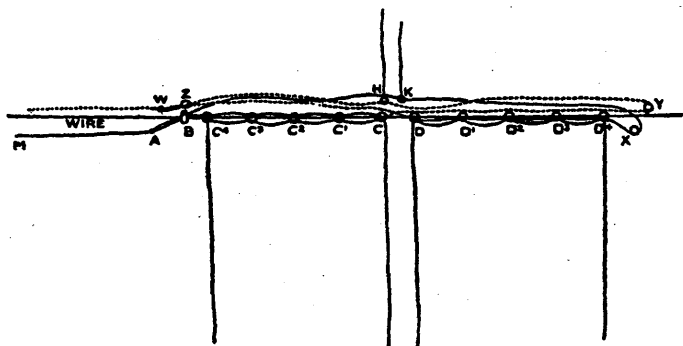
There are four types of front curtain in general use with amateurs.

(1) Draw curtains. Two curtains of velour, denim, twill, or cotton flannel with rings or snaps sewed a foot apart, are hung on a well stretched

wire. These are fastened at the inner edges to the sides of the proscenium arch and drawn out to meet in the middle.

A set of pulleys and cords can be rigged to operate these, but it is less annoying to have two of the ushers draw them at the proper time.

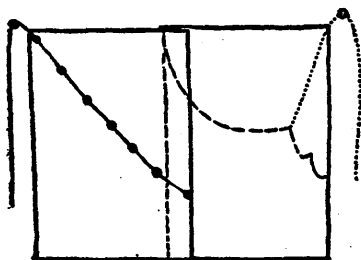
If you wish to operate these draw curtains without the ushers, there must be a set of cords and pulleys (a, b, c, d) to open the curtains, and another set (w, x, y, z) to close them.



Tie the cord to ring C, thread it through a double pulley B. Tie another cord to ring D, thread it through double pulley X, carry it back across stage, passing it through ring K, and through double pulley B. Knot these cords together two or three feet beyond B at A. The pulleys are fixed at convenient places on each side of the proscenium arch. The rings H and K hang on invisible picture wire from above.

Tie a cord of different color to ring C, thread it

through pulley Y, then across the stage through ring H, through double pulley Z. Tie another similar cord to ring D, and thread it through double pulley Z. Knot these two cords two or three feet beyond Z at W. The long cords running from X to B, and from Y to Z, will sag unless each is passed through a ring K or H, hung from the ceiling a few inches above C and D.



(2) A draped curtain is perhaps the most satisfactory home-made device. But this cannot be used unless the room ceiling is high enough for the curtain to be as high as the width of the proscenium arch. That is, the curtain is nearly square.

The curtain is split down the middle, and each half is drawn aside and up by cords fastened about one third of the distance up from the corner in the middle of the stage; and running through rings sewed on the inside of the curtain in a straight diagonal line from thence to the opposite upper corner. The curtains should be wide enough to lap two or three feet.

(3) A roll curtain is easily possible for a narrow stage. Tack the top of the curtain to the arch, and the bottom to the four- or five-inch built-up wooden roller, which extends a foot on each side of the opening. Cords fastened to the roller, and wound around the extension nine or ten times, pass through pulleys fastened to the proscenium arch above. Both cords are carried through pulleys to one side, or, better, to the rear; knotted together and tied to a convenient cleat. When these ends are pulled, the curtain rolls up on the roller fastened to the bottom. Since the curtain carries this up with it, the roller should be as light as is consistent with rigidity.

(4) A front curtain can be discarded altogether without great loss.

If the stage in your church or Sunday-school auditorium has walls on three sides, you may be able to do without scenery if there are doors in each side. Using tiny sponges you can color the white walls in stipple work with the three primary colors, red, blue, and yellow (or orange, violet and green will do). This gives an ideal background. It will look like a restful oatmeal wallpaper, and will also give beautiful effects with simple lighting. If the rear door and door-frame are hopelessly commonplace, it is not impossible to remove them and set up a simple but beautiful doorway. It would be an advantage if the doorway could be raised, and one or two steps up to it could be installed. A central personage appear-

ing in a doorway and coming down a few steps makes a commanding entrance.

For outdoor scenes with houses, the doors will represent the entrances to tempies or homes, and a few evergreen trees here and there are sufficient.

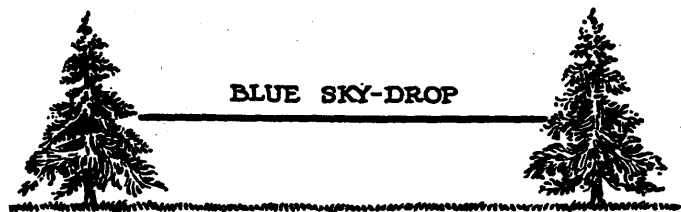
For outdoor scenes where there are no houses, a sky-drop hung at the rear, a cedar tree half-concealing the edge at each end of it, a screen of green burlap at each side to conceal the doors, and some candy pails painted green with small cedar trees or palms will be sufficient. It does not take much to assist the imagination. With a little practice a few large palms can be made from "paper-flower" materials.

A sky-drop can be made of sheeting (seams running horizontal) and painted very light blue below (with a good deal of white left for clouds) and deeper blue above. A light thrown on this through blue gelatin will make even a roughly painted sky look beautiful.

With the sky-drop in the rear, one can use a green denim curtain on each side. The stark plainness of the green curtains may be relieved by attaching to them here and there vines, climbing roses, or a few small branches with fresh leaves.

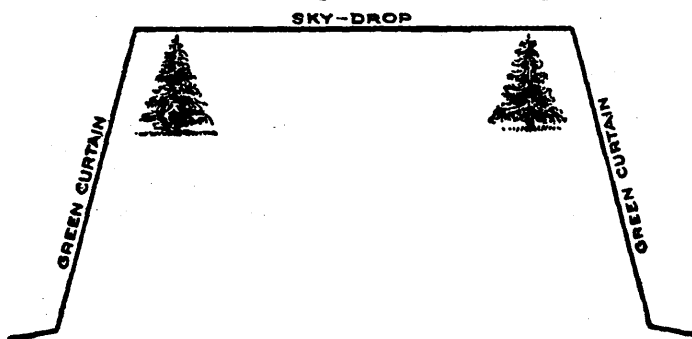
Where the sky-drop meets the floor, some foliage should conceal the hard line of their joining. Or some green or tan cloth, or even some crumpled crêpe paper may represent the irregular horizon line, and mask the joining.

An evergreen tree in each of the rear corners will sufficiently mask the line where the blue sky-drop joins the green side-curtains. Instead of the green side-curtains, a folding-screen of green denim or burlap may be placed at each side.

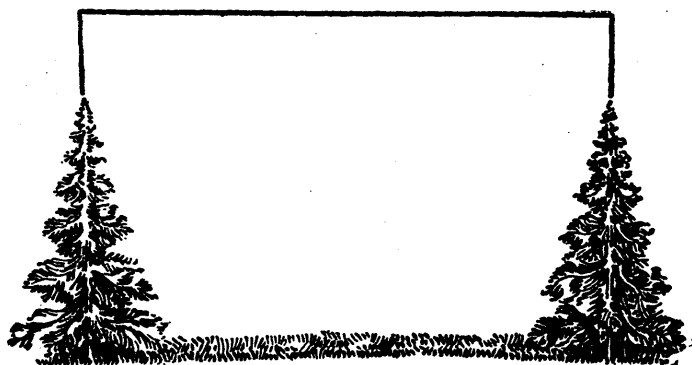


Many church workers have to erect a temporary platform for every play. Some have no convenient way to hang curtains. Some have a platform that juts out into the room so that a curtain stretched across in front of it would debar one third of those present from seeing. Each of these constitutes an in-

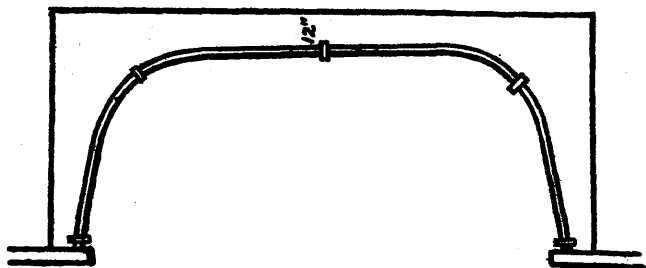
dividual problem. Let us first consider a frequently-found platform built with some idea of giving occasional plays. The platform perhaps projects a few feet from the wall-line and has a recess or alcove at the back, which gives more floor space on the



platform. If the ceiling of the alcove is nearly on the same level as the rest of the ceiling, or if the alcove is large enough itself to contain a stage, then the simplest, the most useful, and the most artistic background is a cyclorama of curtains.



Attach to the ceiling above the stage an iron rod (a "quarter-inch" water pipe is good) bent to round off the square corners at the rear. This should be a foot or more from the walls, so that when curtains are hung from it a person could pass between the wall and the curtain without elbowing the curtain.



The pipe should be fastened to the ceiling at five places, leaving between these, four approximately equal spaces for four curtains. It will of course be fastened at each end, and in the middle (for the curtains should open at the center rear); the other two clamps should be as near the middle of the curves as possible. There should be at least an inch or two between the pipe and the ceiling, so that the rings will slip freely. Put forty-eight two-inch rings on the pipe, twelve for each curtain. Hang four curtains from these rings with a weight in the lower hem. A two-inch bag of sand running the full length in the hem is a good noiseless weight. When finished, the curtains should be six inches longer than would reach the floor. The curtains may be of velour, rep,

denim, light-weight cotton flannel, or sateen. They should be much wider than the space, full enough to hang in graceful folds. The seams should run up and down. For general use, though some prefer black curtains, gray with a tinge of blue, or a bright tan color, will give a wider variety of effects with very simple lighting equipment.

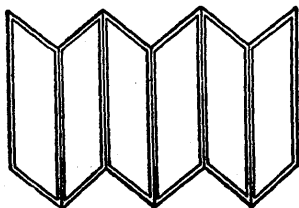
This curtain cyclorama allows the players to enter at five different places. No doors are needed, but they can be used if desired. The weighted curtains will stay apart if so placed. The edge of one can be drawn in front of the other and give free passage without exposing what is behind the scene. Or the two curtains can be pinned together with a large safety-pin seven feet above the floor. A spreader can be inserted just below the pin. This is a stick two or three feet long with a thin nail driven into each end and the heads filed to a point. In this case another curtain may be hung two or three feet back of the opening to conceal what is behind.

For outdoor scenes the rear curtains can be drawn aside and show more or less of a blue sky-drop stretched behind. It should be as far behind the curtains as the stage will permit, in order to give the illusion of distance. Doors, windows, arches, pillars, fireplaces, even Juliet's balcony, can be inserted between curtains. All sorts of modifications can be made without great expense. The cyclorama does away

with the need of bulky equipment for which there is usually scanty storage room.

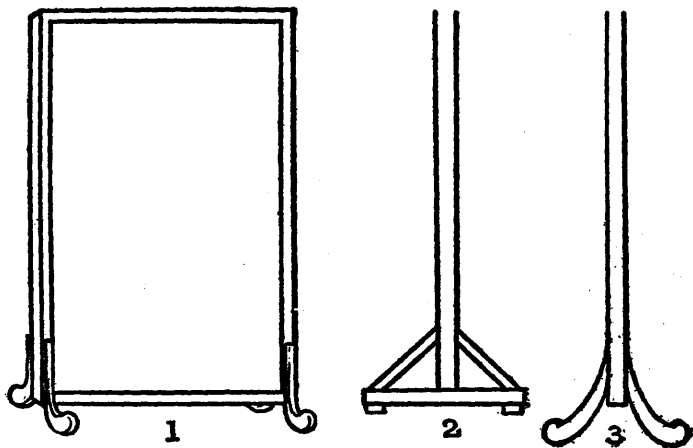
If your platform extends out from a straight wall, with no recess, a cyclorama of curtains may still be possible. If the alcove is too shallow to contain sufficient floor space and half the platform extends beyond the recess, a cyclorama rod may be attached, even if it takes longer fasteners to reach the ceiling outside the alcove.

If your plays are given on the church platform, holes can be bored in the corners of the floor to serve as sockets, and iron pipes about ten feet long inserted for standards. From the tops of these, wires can be strung from which to hang the curtains. If at first this does not seem permissible, some sort of self-standing screens can be used. Folding screens can be made of uniform height. These may have from two to ten leaves. These multiple screens will



stand more securely if tied here and there with a stout string to an inconspicuous eyelet screw in the wall behind. A stick with an eyelet screw in each end is even more secure than a string.

A few large frames may be used with bracket feet to stand side by side without support. Frames can



be made of three-inch boards stained a suitable color. In these can be stretched or pleated, burlap, sateen, or common unbleached sheeting, dyed or painted. In some churches a curtain might be hung in graceful folds from the organ, or from a wire stretched from gallery to gallery at the rear. Then a screen at each side would be sufficient. These screens should of course be made of the same material as the rear curtain.

Let us hope that your platform is at least twenty feet wide and twelve feet from front to rear. It would be far better if it were wider and deeper, so that

space could be saved at the back for players to pass, and at each side for furnishings and stage properties needed in the next scene. It is desirable to have as much floor space off-stage as the area the audience sees. The sky-drop should be several feet back of the opening in the curtains to give a better illusion of distance and outdoors. But if space is not obtainable, remember that good work can be done on a very tiny stage.

Such a cyclorama of curtains is not supposed to *represent* houses, or woods, or mountains. It simply shuts out extraneous things and leaves the audience free to use its imagination. For the court of King Solomon, we need only a tall armchair on a dais and a square of tapestry hung behind it (probably pinned to the curtains). A bit of burlap dyed very dark brown for a tent, with a pot outside for cooking, and perhaps a few stones on the other side of the stage for an altar, gives a setting for Abraham.

A number of cat-tails grouped in one corner, or across the rear if the sky is shown, are sufficient for the finding of Moses. For Pharaoh's court an Egyptian doorway can be made from waste strips of wood, an inch or more square, nailed together for a framework and covered with pasteboard from the grocer's corrugated boxes and then painted a pinkish red and decorated with hieroglyphs. Of course a light weight "wall-board," in large sheets, makes a

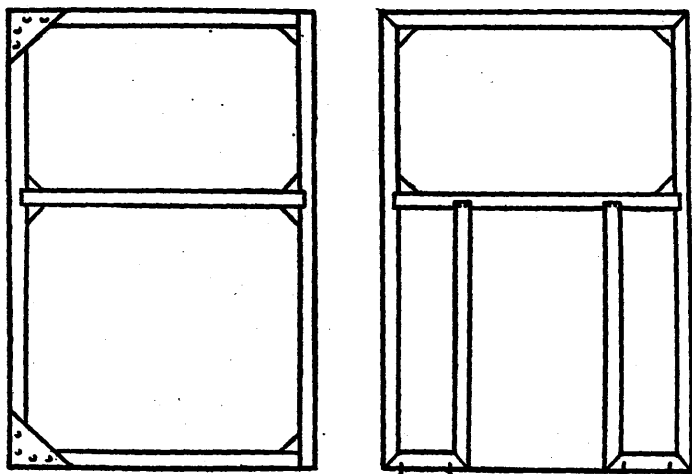
neater and easier job, and is not very expensive. A few branches of juniper, cedar or hemlock and some stage rocks make an adequate desert scene.

Perhaps the easiest way to make rocks is to use wooden boxes of various sizes. To each side and bottom tie and tack excelsior securely with string. Let it be in irregular bunches. Then cover it all with an old window shade securely tacked on to the edges from which the lid has been removed. Paint it gray-brown with a "flat" paint (that is, using turpentine instead of oil). These rocks can be clustered together or used separately, and are strong enough to be climbed upon.

While a cyclorama of curtains is not only the easiest, and usually the most artistic, yet there are some people and perhaps some communities that will not be satisfied until they have tried to produce realistic scenery. Realistic scenery is made most easily and economically by the use of "flats." Assuming that the height of your picture-frame (proscenium arch) is ten feet and that you have plenty of clearance or "head-room" above the stage, make your flats twelve feet high. But they must be a few inches lower than the ceiling or overhead beams for ease in handling.

Flats and all stage furnishings should be made in a standard size. The standard can be any size you choose. For a small stake 5' 2" wide is convenient. The frame can be covered with thin unbleached sheeting "seven quarters" wide, tacked every four inches.

This sheeting is then "sized," that is, brushed with diluted hot glue. After it dries, a coat of calcimine can be easily applied. Some calcimine does not need size.



The frame of the flat is made of some soft and light wood, like poplar, 3 inches wide, dressed down from 1 inch. Your local carpenter will wish to make mitered joints, and to nail a triangular block brace inside each corner. But mitered joints are not necessary, especially if you reinforce each joint with a triangle of veneer board nailed securely to each corner. It is well also to put a cross-brace 6' 6" from the bottom. Use corrugated fasteners.

Flats with doors are of similar dimensions. Along

the bottom of these, however, instead of the 3-inch board, it is better to get a strip of iron 5' 1" long, $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Drill four holes in this iron (countersink them) for screws and thus fix it securely across the bottom of the flat.

The doorway may be 27" wide and 6' 6" high. The door for it should be $\frac{1}{4}$ " less than this each way. One flat should have double doors, each 27" wide. Hinges should be exactly 12" from the top and 12" from the bottom, or any other standard distance you choose. Small brass hinges with pins (2" butts) allow you to take off the doors and put French windows on instead, without taking off the hinges.

One flat should have a window. Three feet six inches or four feet square is not too large, with sill 24" from floor. Very thin strips $\frac{1}{4}$ " by $\frac{3}{4}$ " can be tacked across a light frame 2" by $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Nothing is necessary to represent glass. If you are fastidious, stretch mosquito netting over it. It is useful to make the window sash in two parts, hanging these from each side like doors. This makes it easy to step through the window when necessary. A reasonably complete set of flats would include:

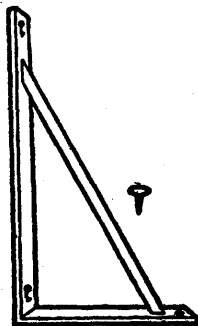
3 plain wall flats	5'-2"
2 with single doors (one hinged on right, one on left)	5'-2"
1 with double doors (also pair of "glass" doors)	5'-2"
1 with window	5'-2"

3 half size plain wall flats	2'-7"
(use yad-wide cheap muslin for these)	
2 jogs (for bay window, door recess, etc.)	15½"

It might be well to make the double door sixteen inches from the ground, and make a separate step 8" by 10" by 5' 10" to place in front. There should also be a light platform 15¾" high by 2' 10" for use behind, so that when the door opens the player can enter naturally on the level of the threshold. Two such platforms are useful. They can be used together as a platform, on which to set a throne, etc. These flats can be roughly painted a cream buff for indoors. The back could be painted to represent stone-work. It is not much trouble to calcimine them any color as needed. If sufficient sizing is used, the calcimine does not "crack off" readily.

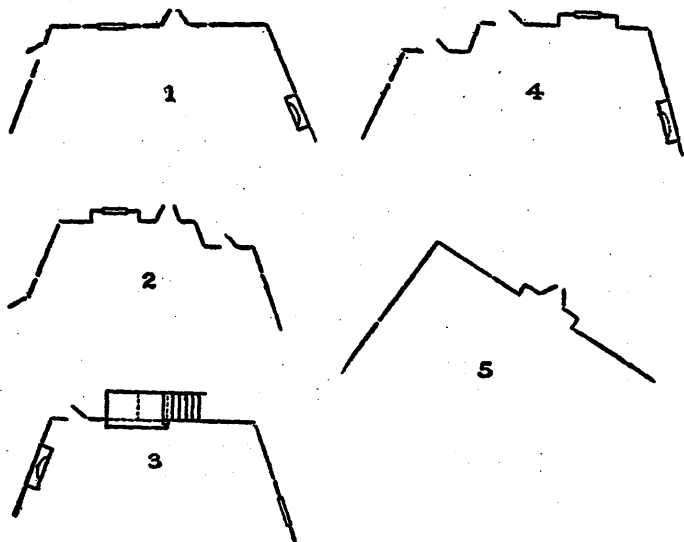
But how do these flats stand up? They are laced together with cords. On the back of each flat at the *right* side, about 8 feet high, insert a screw-eye into the inner edge of the frame *parallel with the sheeting*. (Never allow nails or screws to be put into the flats except in the inner edges, else there will be holes torn when they are stacked together.) Put a 7-foot cord through this eyelet and knot it. Drive a sixpenny nail about 5 feet high and another 3 feet, also parallel. In the *left* side of each flat drive a nail about 7 feet up (or as high as you can reach), two others 5 feet and 3 feet. When the flats are in place, lace the cord back and forth around these

nails and fasten it on the lowest in a slip noose. Lash cleats are more satisfactory than nails, and are not expensive.



Flats with doors may need a "stage-brace" or a "jack" to hold them firm enough. The former is a strong strip of wood an inch square 7 or 8 feet long with a brace-hook screwed to the upper end and a brace-eye to the lower. Through the eye a floor-screw is screwed into the floor 3 feet behind the flat. A jack is a home-made right-angle brace. To make it requires a 3-inch strip 6-feet long, another 2½ feet and a diagonal about 5-feet. On the upright two wire hooks near top and bottom find corresponding screw-eyes in the flat. A floor-screw through a hole in the end of the jack holds it firmly to the floor. At least half a dozen such jacks or stage-braces are needed. Floor-screws and stage-braces can be bought from any dealer in stage hardware.

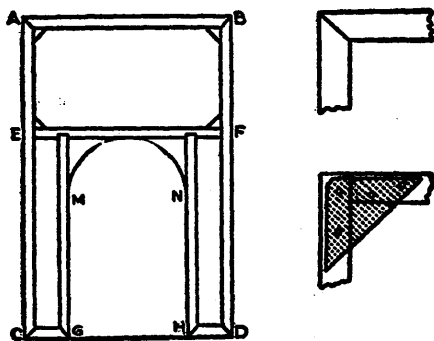
With these flats one can make a great variety of rooms, or interior sets. Occasionally one must make a new bit of scenery or stage property. In No. 1 there is a marble fireplace and mantel, made of one-



and-a-half-inch strips and wallboard painted white with a few indistinct blue smears to suggest the veins in the marble. In No. 3, we have added a step 5 feet 1 inch wide, two platforms 15 inches high, 2'-6" by 2'-6", and a flight of five stairs 2 feet 6 inches wide. All steps are 7½ inches high with a "tread" 10 inches deep. The stair railing or balustrade is detachable, fastened in place with wire hooks and screw-eyelets.

Even if you do not build a set of flats, but rely upon the more simple, serviceable and beautiful cyclorama of curtains, you may find one or two solid pieces very useful.

An archway, set up between the rear curtains, will produce a decided change. It forms a keystone to the arch of curtains. If the play has a central personage in a dominating situation, a stately entrance at the rear may add greatly to the general effect. The entrance or exit may be still further enhanced by placing the step in the archway and the platform (in two pieces) just behind it. Or the arch may be raised fifteen inches and placed upon the platform, so that an important person standing in the archway would be a much more commanding figure than one would expect from a few inches of elevation.



A working sketch of a flat with an arch.

Height ac is 10 feet.

Width ab is 5 feet 2 inches.

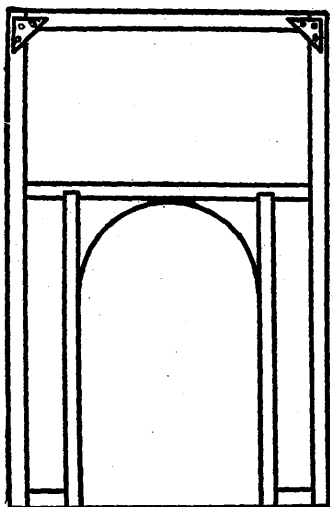
Height to spring of arch gm is 6 feet.

Width of cg is 12 inches.

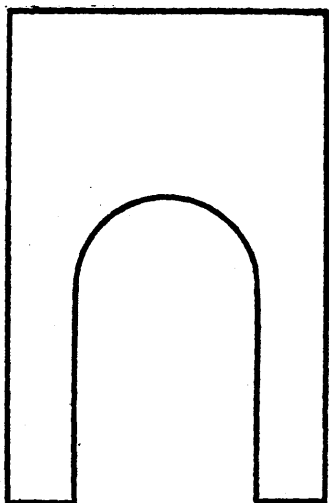
Width of archway gh is 38 inches.

Radius of arch is (half of 38) 19 inches.

Bottom of brace ef is one inch lower than 6 feet plus 19 inches (90 inches).



REAR



FRONT

A curve is cut out in the middle of this brace one inch deep so that the top of the arch can be fitted in and nailed securely. Two transverse braces will help to hold the arch. The arch is made of a board $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick, four or five inches wide, six feet long. C-G, H-D—flat iron $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide with four countersunk holes fastened to C-G, H-D with

1½ inch screws. Unbleached sheeting is tacked on the frame to represent solid wall.

On many occasions two, three or four separate pillars, nine or ten feet high, will be found very useful. These may be round or square with the simplest of bases and capitals. Their diameter at the top should be a couple of inches less than at the bottom. With these pillars and a marble seat, you have enough atmosphere and imaginative suggestion for many effective scenes, whether used on an indoor stage or in the open. In either case it is easy to have a green background, or a blue sky at the rear and green curtains at the sides (or green screens).

It is best to try out and judge your scenic effects from the back of the auditorium. From a distance one soon learns the futility of little details. Work toward simplicity. Group things in masses. Bring out strong unbroken lines. As in drawing, use few strokes but powerful, instead of a lot of weak and fussy dabs.

Not only should all designs be simple, but the colors in costumes or settings should be strong, even striking. Avoid delicate shades, intricate patterns in the goods or trimmings. The persons, the costumes and the stage furnishings make the pattern that the audience sees in the stage picture. One sometimes achieves a desired effect by emphasizing or exaggerating a significant feature. To suggest military domination let a company of soldiers have very tall spears. For a pastoral scene, have a considerable

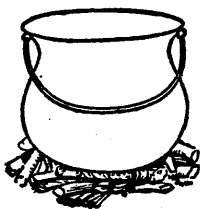
group of shepherds with tall crooks, or a number of women with large water-jars. Such groups become somewhat symbolic as well as decorative. Sometimes they would be entirely out of place. The director must know what atmosphere he wishes to produce and exercise a severe and discriminating judgment.

The setting, of course, is not complete without the costumes and the lighting, but the discussion of these must be left for another chapter. The following plays will give excellent practice in the designing of simple but effective settings.

When making the first sketch for the setting of a play, we must study the play carefully to ascertain the minimum requirements. What is there in the scene as we read it that is so essential to the meaning of the play that we cannot omit it? Perhaps there is a throne on a dais or low platform; of course a kitchen chair will not do. Perhaps there should be a stately entrance. A flat containing an open archway is easy to make, and if the proportions are good, it may suggest a palace.

The following play, "Joshua's Decision," may be effectively staged with a sky-drop at the rear, a good-sized tree or clump of bushes in the left corner, a larger clump in the right corner extended towards center—green curtains on each side, or vines or branches pinned upon your regular curtains. The clump of bushes on the right should be arranged down stage a few feet from the sky-drop at the rear, so as to permit entrance and exit be-

tween the bushes and the sky. A tent might protrude, as it were, two or three feet from the side curtains on the left, and a red electric bulb down right with several handfuls of small twigs upon it for a fire, over which is a small three-legged pot.



A few rocks, one of them large enough to sit on, will add to the wilderness atmosphere.

JOSHUA'S DECISION

[JOSHUA seated on a rock in front of a small tent.

Left, others standing, sitting, lying; one down right, tending a small fire on which is a pot.

JABEZ. I took his sword and baldric after I killed him. Jashur picked up his javelin. It was a fine sword too, but I have a good one of my own, so I gave it to Jashur for the javelin. [*Showing it.*] See, it is a beautiful javelin. The blade is fine steel, bound with rawhide, and the shaft is the heart of a young terebinth sapling. It fits your hand like a cake of barley, and flies as smooth as an eagle.

NAHOR. I got this bronze buckler. [*Showing broad belt of bronze plates.*]

JERUEL. I got the finest ass I ever saw. It is as yellow as a tiger, with dark bars around its legs and across its back. It is a beast fit for a king.

JABEZ. What will you take for it, Jeruel?

JERUEL [*laughing*]. I wouldn't trade it for all you possess, Jabez.

JABEZ. My Lord Joshua, what is the next place we are capturing?

HILKIAH. Will you give us the spoils of that too? [*JOSHUA smiles and nods.*] I want a robe from Damascus or—Babylon [*lowering his voice so that JOSHUA will not hear*], like that robe Achan found in Jericho, poor fellow.

JABEZ. Where do these people get such goodly plunder?

JERUEL. Ha! here comes some one—a messenger.

EZER [*entering rather breathless*]. Peace, my Lord Joshua.

JOSHUA. And to thee, Ezer, peace. Whence comest thou in such haste?

EZER. I have come from the sons of Manasseh, who are encamped on the slope of Mount Gerazim. Their scouts have brought tidings. The Amorites and the Hittites have confederated together, and are gathering great companies of men in the valley of Shechem, between Ebal and Gerazim. The valley is black with their tents. They have

sent messengers to the Jebusites, on this side of you, and to the Canaanites by the shore of the Great Sea. They are all coming with one accord to fight my Lord Joshua.

[EZER goes to fire; MEROB gives him a barley cake and spoons up some stew. EZER secures a piece, squats and eats.]

HILKIAH. All at once, my Lord Joshua? We can never fight them all at once.

NAHOR. Maybe we can finish off one band before the others get here.

JERUEL. Ezer says they are joining together before they set the battle in array against us. What can we do, my Lord Joshua?

JOSHUA. Be strong and of good courage, and Jehovah our God will be with us.

NAHOR. I wish I felt as sure as he does.

DIBON [*enters from right*]. My Lord Captain, there is a caravan of asses coming down across the mountain. The chief is an old man. They bring greetings of peace and ask for the captain of our army.

JOSHUA. Bring them hither, Dibon. [DIBON goes out.]

NAHOR. Well, I am glad somebody wants to make peace with us. I wonder who they are.

JABEZ. Some enemies of these Jebusites and Amorites, I suppose, that are glad to join somebody else to fight against them.

HILKIAH. Here they come. [*He goes toward right*

and bows low to the three strangers as they enter.]

Come ye in peace, my fathers?

GIBEONITE CHIEF. Yea, in peace. God's peace to this company. [*He sees JOSHUA and kneels before him with forehead on hands.*] Peace to thy house, O father of thy people. [*He rises, takes small casket from one of the attendants that have just entered, opens it and takes out gold chain, gold bracelets, and armlets, which he offers to JOSHUA, who waves him to JABEZ.*] We brought you a present. It is but little, for thy servants are poor, and we have come from afar to eat the bread of peace with you. [*He turns to another attendant and takes a scrip.*] Behold the bread which thy servants took fresh from our ovens. It is dried up and mouldy. We have traveled from a far country—very far. The wineskins are hardened and cracked. They were new when we began our journey. Wilt thou pardon the rags of thy servants? The long journey has worn out our raiment and we are all rents and patches.

[They sit upon the rugs and blankets several have spread for them.]

JOSHUA. Hilkiash, set bread before these travelers that they may eat in peace. [*HILKIAH passes a small tray of barley cakes. All eat.*] What would ye say, my father? Speak, for thy servants hearken.

GIBEONITE CHIEF. We have been sent unto you to make a covenant of peace.

JOSHUA. Who are ye? and from whence are ye come?

GIBEONITE CHIEF. We are thy servants. From a very far country are thy servants come, because we heard the report of thy God, and what he did to the Egyptians, and to the two Kings of the Amorites beyond Jordan, to Sihon, King of Heshbon, and to Og, King of Bashan.

JERUEL. Aye, the fame of Jehovah hath traveled far.

JABEZ. It will travel farther yet before we have done.

GIBEONITE CHIEF. The elders of our people spake unto us saying, "Take provision in your hands for the journey, and go to meet the Elders of Israel and say unto them, 'We are your servants. Make ye a covenant with us?'" "Now therefore, O thou blessed of the Lord, make a covenant with thy servants and let us live. And let it be peace between thy people and my people from this day, henceforth and forever. And behold, if it please my lord, we shall eat thy bread and thou shalt eat our bread together in peace.

NAHOR. My Lord Joshua, shall we eat the bread of these strangers? They have eaten ours.

JABEZ. Peradventure they may help us against the Amorites and Hittites that encamp against us in the valley of Heshbon.

JERUEL. Yea let us eat, and let them swear by our God Jehovah.

JOSHUA. Will ye swear unto us by our God?

GIBEONITE CHIEF [*rises with all GIBEONITES*]. Yea, by thy God Jehovah will we swear a covenant of

peace, and this brooch of gold shall be the sign of the covenant. [*Gives it.*]

JOSHUA [*rises with all the ISRAELITES*]. And we on our part swear by Jehovah our God that we will make peace with your people forever. This armlet of gold shall be your sign from us. [*Gives it.*]

GIBEONITE CHIEF. And now, my Lord Joshua, let thy servants depart unto our own country in peace. And may the peace of God rest on the house of Israel. [*They bow low and go out.*]

NAHOR. Well, we need to make treaty with somebody before these Amorites sweep down on us.

HILKIAH. But if these men live such a long way off, they will not be much help to us just now.

JABEZ. Others will soon recognize our prowess and be glad to make covenants with us.

JERUEL. But we don't get any spoils this way. I don't want too much peace.

MESSANGER [*enters hastily*]. My Lord Joshua, thy servant and three other men were scouting up around Ramah and, behold, we have tidings.

JOSHUA. Speak, my son, what are your tidings?

MESSANGER. The Elders of Gibeon and Kefirah that dwell just over the mountain have conspired together to deceive my Lord Joshua. They are preparing old raiment, and outworn sandals, and mouldy provisions, as if they had come a long journey, and they are coming to ask thee for a treaty of peace.

JABEZ. Why! they have already come. [JOSHUA

gasps in silence, conscious that he has been outwitted.]

HILKIAH. And we consented to covenant. Why, they have scarcely left us.

JERUEL. My Lord Joshua, we can soon overtake them. Let us kill them and burn their cities with fire.

MESSANGER [*going to fire*]. I'd like to eat first. I have had nothing since yesterday.

NAHOR. Yes, it is a wise old saying that meat and drink never hinders work.

JABEZ. Nay, let us pursue them at once.

JOSHUA. Aye, let every man gird on his sword.

JERUEL. We'll hang these liars on a lofty gallows to dry in the sun.

JABEZ. And slay every Gibeonite with the edge of the sword. [*Some confusion as all put on armor, or restrap a sandal, find a sword or adjust a helmet. Servant brings JOSHUA broad armored belt or rude corselet, then a baldric with short sword.*]

JOSHUA [*suddenly stops after his corselet is adjusted*]. Halt! [*Confusion hushed to dead silence.*] We cannot slay these men.

JABEZ. We can soon overtake them.

JOSHUA. Nay! I swore by Jehovah our God that I would not slay them, and every chief among you has eaten their bread.

HILKIAH. But they deceived us. They are liars.

JOSHUA. They are liars. But I am not.

NAHOR. If we spare them, they will bide their time,

and lie in wait for us, and fall upon us suddenly, when we think not.

JERUEL. Aye, when we have gone forth against our enemies, and left our wives and little ones at home. These men will come upon them with the sword, and destroy our wives and little ones when we are gone.

JOSHUA. I have sworn by Jehovah to spare them.

JABEZ. But it is dangerous to leave them—

JOSHUA. Am I a man that would lie before the God of Israel because of danger?

HILKIAH. But you had already sworn by Jehovah to go in and possess the land.

NAHOR. Aye, did not Jehovah command us to slay the inhabitants? "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it." So he spake unto Moses.

JABEZ. They asked you to make a treaty of peace with a people that lived in a far land. You made peace with a people that live afar off. They cannot complain if you make war upon all that are near.

JOSHUA. Nay, Jabez, you speak wilily,—like unto these deceivers. We must not go, like a serpent, by underground ways. They beguiled us by their wiliness, and our folly. We took not counsel of Jehovah, our God. We forgot sound judgment and discretion.

"Hearken not unto flattering words

But set a watchman at the door of thy lips."

We should have sent messengers and inquired diligently.

"He that hasteth with his feet misseth the way."

We have sinned greatly in this thing, and I am chief.

HILKIAH [*bowing deferentially*]. We have been as watchmen asleep on the walls. But must all the people reap the fruit of our folly? Must our wives and little ones suffer danger?

JOSHUA [*nods assent seriously*]. God forbid that we should lie, or break a covenant that has passed our lips. Put away your swords. We shall not harm a hair of their heads.

[*Some low murmurs*, "Well, I suppose we must let them go."]

JOSHUA. If any man break out upon them in blood, I will thrust him through with my javelin, were he my own mother's son. [*Gives javelin to servant and turns, breaking the suspense. To NAHOR.*] Send for these men and bring them hither in peace.

[NAHOR, EZER, DIBON *go out quickly.*]

JOSHUA. Why did we not wait?

"Wisdom hath made prudence her dwelling-place,

But he that is puffed up hasteth like a bird to the snare."

JABEZ. Aye, we are hasting into the snare. Behold, the people will murmur against us, and rise up against us to smite us, if we avenge not ourselves upon these men that beguiled us.

JOSHUA. Have we not sworn unto them by the God of Israel? Shall we make our God a liar, standing with us in this thing? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Let every man that giveth his hand to a covenant, keep his pledge before Jehovah forever.

"He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not,
He shall stand before Jehovah, and never be moved."

EZER [*enters*]. My Lord Joshua, we have brought them.

[*Reënter the three GIBEONITE ELDERS, NAHOR and others following them.*]

JOSHUA. Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying ye live in a far country when ye dwell in our midst?

GIBEONITE CHIEF. My lord, we are thy servants. Was it not certainly told us that Jehovah thy God commanded Moses to give you all our land and destroy all the inhabitants? Therefore we were

sore afraid. And they sent us saying, "Go, and make peace for us. Haply their God may have mercy upon us, that we may live and not die." And we came unto you, as ye know. And now, behold, we are in thy hand. Do unto us as it seemeth good and right unto thee.

JOSHUA. I swear by Jehovah the God of Israel that I would not slay you. Now, therefore, live. But because ye have beguiled us with false words, ye shall be as bondmen. Ye shall be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation of Israel, from henceforth and forever.

GIBEONITE CHIEF. We are thy servants.

JOSHUA. Go in peace.

CURTAIN

SAUL'S AWAKENING

SCENE

[The outside of SAMUEL's house at Ramah. When one enters from left front, bushes conceal the door.]

MESSENGER *[enters hastily from left]*. They told me it was on the top of this hill. "A good house on the top of the knoll." *[Coming around the bushes, sees door.]* Ah, this must be the place. *[Calls.]*

A-la-o! [*Knocks at door.*] My father! [*Knocks again.*]

WOMAN [*opens door and stands in doorway*]. Behold I am here.

MESSENGER. Is this the house of Samuel the prophet?

WOMAN. Aye, it is.

MESSENGER. I bear a message from the elders of Beth-horon.

WOMAN. I'll call him. Oh, here is my Lord Samuel.

SAMUEL. Enter, my son, in peace.

MESSENGER. To you peace, my father. A band of Philistines have burned the village of Beth-horon and the people have fled. Many of the men are slain. The elders, the women and the little ones are scattered. They are hiding in the caves, and have no bread.

SAMUEL [*calls to some one inside the house*]. Abner!

Abner! [*ABNER appears from right, outside the house.*] Gird up thy loins, Abner, and hasten to Gibeah, and warn the elders of the village that bands of Philistines are abroad. Let them beware. Tell them also that the fugitives from Beth-horon are hiding in caves and are in need of bread. [*ABNER has laid aside his cloak, settled his head-band, tightened his girdle, and runs out, left.*]

And thou, my son [*to the messenger*], shalt run in haste to warn the elders and the people of Bethel. But first come in and eat bread, lest thou faint by the way. [*They both go in.*]

[*Enter from left SAUL and his father's serv-*

ant, OTHNIEL. They are weary. They do not at first see the house.]

OTHNIEL. Saul, dost thou not think we'd better go home? That herd of donkeys will become wild asses before we find them.

SAUL. But I do not like to give up the search and return home empty-handed. If we do not find them up on the top of this mountain, we might go down on the other side and search among the caves and cliffs at the head of the valley of Ajalon.

OTHNIEL. Nay! nay! if they have wandered down there, some of those Philistine marauders have captured them long ago.

SAUL. We can go and see.

OTHNIEL. Nay! nay! your father by this time is disturbed more about you— He would rather have his son safe than his whole herd of asses, and his camels thrown in. It is three days since we left home, remember. I'll wager he has sent men out to search for us already.

SAUL. I don't like to give up. [*After thinking.*] I wish we could find a soothsayer to consult the stars for us.

OTHNIEL [*gasps with sudden idea*]. Why, there is a seer lives here at Ramah, but—he is not exactly a soothsayer. He is not the cheap kind. I don't know whether he would practice divination about common things like asses.

SAUL. No harm in asking him! Who is he? Let us find him.

OTHNIEL. It is Samuel the prophet. He lives somewhere near here.

SAUL. The prophet Samuel! We ought to have a good present for him. [*Looks at armlet.*] I'll give him this. [*Taking it off.*] It is bronze. It is good enough for a present to anybody. Let us inquire for him. [*Looks around, does not see house, turns to go out, left.*]

OTHNIEL [*looking off, shakes head, turns*]. It ought to be this other way. [*Comes right, looking about.*] Here is a house. I'll ask them where he lives. [*Knocks.*] He might live here. This is a good house. [*Woman opens door.*]

SAUL. We are seeking the prophet Samuel. Can you tell us where he lives?

WOMAN. Yea, he lives here. This is his house.

SAUL. Tell him I would speak with him, Saul, son of Kish, from the village of Bethlehem.

WOMAN. Yea, I will call my Lord Samuel. [*She goes and SAMUEL comes.*]

SAUL [*bowing low*]. Peace to you, my father, and to your house.

SAMUEL [*right hand in benediction*]. And to you, the peace of God. Come in and eat bread.

SAUL. Nay, my father, we may not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left; we are in haste.

SAMUEL. What? have the Philistines attacked Bethlehem also?

SAUL. Nay, nay, Lord Samuel. We have seen no Philistines. We have lost a herd of asses. They

have wandered afar. We have sought them for three days and found them not. [*Takes off armlet and offers it to SAMUEL.*] Take, I pray thee, this present from me and divine for me; peradventure then thou canst tell us where we may find them.

SAMUEL. Nay, keep thine ornaments. I need them not. Was it a herd of milch asses, with colts?

SAUL. Yea, about forty of them.

SAMUEL. Well, they are found. We have them here.

My servant, Abner, drove them into our pen-fold at daybreak this morning. They wandered up from the south. We thought they probably belonged to some Hebrew, and the Philistines might get them. So he and Benoni drove them in and gave them water. You can drive them home when you will. But, my son [*looking him over with admiration*], God has made thee for a prince, not a herdsman. Thou shouldst be driving Philistines instead of asses.

SAUL [*with a rueful smile*]. Alas, my father, the Philistines drive us.

SAMUEL. And they will drive us forever, until a leader appears, a captain brave enough to rally our people and lead them against the Philistines. With a leader to gather the scattered people and hurl them on the enemy, we should have victory, instead of this slavery.

SAUL. But who am I, my father, to be a Prince in Israel? I am of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest

of the tribes, and my father's house is the least among the families of Benjamin.

SAMUEL. God's hand is not shortened. He can save by great or small, if a man will offer himself. God must have a man to be a hiding place from the storm, like a great rock in a weary land. Before thou wast out of thy cradle Jehovah called thee to be a leader and commander of his people. Therefore he gave thee great stature and mighty sinews and a courageous heart. Smite the oppressor and deliver the people out of his hand. Tarry a moment. [*Calls.*] Hagar! Hagar! bring me a horn of oil. [*HAGAR comes to door and hands SAMUEL a small sheep's horn full of oil.*] Refuse not Jehovah when he summons thee from being a herdsman of asses to be the shepherd of his people. [*SAUL kneels before SAMUEL, who pours the oil upon his head.*] Jehovah go with thee to bless thee, all the days of thy life. Jehovah make thee strong to gird up thy people, and to judge righteous judgments for all that are wronged.

SAUL. My father, all that thou sayest unto me I will do, if thou wilt be with me, and Jehovah thy God will strengthen my hand.

SAMUEL. Jehovah thy God hath anointed thee to be Prince over his people, and the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee to deliver the people from their oppressors. Arise, my son, and enter and eat.

PLOWMAN [*carrying a slender goad*]. My Lord Samuel, I have plowed the barley field. The oxen are still in the yoke. What shall we plow next?

SAMUEL. Peace, who comes here?

MESSENGER [*enters hastily*] Tidings for my Lord Samuel.

SAMUEL. I am Samuel. Whence come you with tidings?

MESSENGER. From beyond the Jordan, from Gilead. The inhabitants of Jabesh are brought very low.

SAUL. Wherefore, man? Say on!

MESSENGER. They are besieged. Nahash, the King of Ammon, has encamped around us and slain all those that went out to fight him. And our elders said to him, "We are not strong enough to resist thee. Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee." And Nahash the Ammonite said unto our Elders, "On this condition will I make a covenant of peace with you—after I pluck out the right eye of every man."

SAUL. Now, God rebuke him for his cruelty.

SAMUEL. Did the Elders submit?

MESSENGER. Nay, my father, they besought a respite for seven days, to send messengers through all the borders of Israel; "then if there be none to save us, we will come out to thee, and thou shalt do unto us according to thy will."

SAUL. Seven days! How long since— Nay, no matter. [*Turns to SAMUEL.*] Find me swift messengers. [*SAMUEL goes out right. To plowman.*]

Where are those oxen? [*To OTHNIEL.*] Othniel, slay me these oxen, cut them in pieces, hew through hide and flesh, and send a piece to every village in Israel. And whosoever cometh not after Saul and Samuel to fight for Jabesh-Gilead, his oxen will I cut in pieces. [*One or two men enter quietly.*] Let them gather at the ford of the Jordan near Abel-Meholah by this time tomorrow. Let every man bring a sword, or a spear, or a shepherd's club, and a handful of parched corn in his scrip. May the God of Israel forsake us if we go not every man to the help of his brethren. Get you a piece of flesh and go swiftly. See that ye tarry not. [*All the men leave.*]

WOMAN [*at door*]. Will my lord come in and eat bread? All is ready.

SAUL. Nay, I must hasten, to see that all is done as I have commanded.

WOMAN. If my lord does not eat, he will faint by the way. Take a morsel of food, I beseech thee, that thy strength may not fail. [*SAUL shakes head.*] Let me give thee at least a barley cake to put in thy scrip to carry with thee. Let thy handmaid fill thy scrip. [*He takes it off—it hangs on a strap over his shoulder—and gives it to her. She goes in.*]

SAMUEL [*who has returned in time to hear*]. Stay, my son, prayer and provender never hinders work.

SAUL. Nay, my father, hinder me not. I must seek out three or four captains, that we may march

upon the Ammonites in three bands and come upon them before the dawn of day. [WOMAN brings SAUL his scrip. He goes out, left.]

WOMAN. A wilful man must have his way. But he's a headstrong man that leaves a roast lamb untouched.

SAMUEL. Hagar, this youth is now the Prince of Israel. If he is as strong as he is sudden, he will drive out all our enemies and my gray head can sleep in peace. May the hand of God support him.

CURTAIN

A very simple setting will serve for this play: a sky-drop at the rear; a doorway for Samuel's house in the curtains at the right rear; a clump of high bushes in center to hide the house or doorway from the players on the left; a bush, or screen covered with vines right front, behind which players may go out; and a similar arrangement left front.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LIGHTING

There is no point in the presenting of plays at which the professional theater production is so strongly differentiated from that of the amateur as in the lighting. This is an age of mechanical invention, preëminently an age of electricity, and the theaters have made a thorough study of lighting, and produced unbelievable wonders of light and color. But while this can create a fascinating spectacle, it cannot make a great play. The drama is the presentation of human character in every variety of environment, and under all sorts of stress. All the mental and physical light that can be thrown upon the human soul in its efforts and development is important. But such light is utterly subordinate to the person himself. Skillful physical lighting is a great help—when it is not a great hindrance—in the revealment of the person's inner life, his moods, his hopes, his fears, his aims, his defeats, his successes. And lighting has never been so skillful and fascinating as today. Yet the chief requisite in a play is not apparatus, but an able and attractive person skilled in expressing thought and feeling. Both are desir-

able, but the player is the essential. The portrayal of human character in heart-moving situations can be successfully presented with very simple lighting facilities.

Shakespeare's company played "Hamlet" and "As You Like It" by the smoky, fluttering light of torches. Garrick, the unsurpassable, had only candles. Mrs. Siddons, the greatest English actress, won her amazing success in *Lady Macbeth* with no light but candles. It was only at the close of her majestic career that Argand burners began to be used. Macready's genius had only the foggy light from whale-oil lanterns or the ghastly glare of coal-gas.

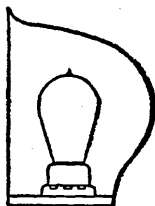
No one need feel discouraged for lack of expensive lighting equipment. Artificial light, softer than the strong light of day, creates a sort of glamour, in which the critical faculties subside, the imagination is stimulated, and the sympathies are subtly aroused. But too much light is not desirable. The chief need is to provide sufficient light to see the expression on the faces of the players. This can be supplied as it has been in the past by torches, candles, lanterns, kerosene lamps or electric lights.

Those groups that have only kerosene will find the "angle-lamp" the best to use, because it throws no shadow of itself. A wall or bracket lamp on each side as near the front curtain as is safe, and a double lamp hanging from the ceiling, reasonably near the front. A few low lamps, for footlights, may be set on the stage floor with tin reflectors to protect the

eyes of the audience. Groups that have electric lights may use a row of footlights and a row of overhead lights (the upper light should be three or four times as strong as the footlights). Overhead lighting throws into deep shadow the eyes, and mouth, and if a hat is worn, the entire face. Footlights are used to counteract the strong shadows thus thrown. As natural light always comes from above, though not usually in direct rays, people look unnatural if the footlights are too strong. Again and again one sees inexperienced directors lighting the stage mostly from the footlights. The result is grotesque. The faces look like gargoyles. If there are eight 75-watt bulbs above, four 40-watt bulbs will give light enough for footlights. It is perhaps better to have the footlight bulbs of frosted glass. Instead of using these lights above and below, some directors prefer to use bunch-lights or flood-lights, illuminating the faces of the players from a level six feet above the stage floor. These may be hung out in the audience (front-lights) or operated from the side of the stage. It is important that the overhead light should shine upon the faces of the players, not upon their backs. Perhaps a well-meaning contractor has hung a row of lights across the rear or middle of your stage. If the stage is deep, some light may be useful back there. But for small stages, it is better to bring all the lights as far forward as possible. Some directors even hang the overhead light trough several feet in front of the curtain.

Footlights and overhead lights ("border lights") can be home-made, or may be bought from reliable stage-lighting firms. In the latter case perhaps the best service can be obtained by using individual "baby spot- and flood-lights." Each of these, of course, is controlled by its own separate switch. A row of these hung overhead, tilted downwards, and a few judiciously placed for footlights permit a wide range of adjustment to the needs of different plays. They can, if desired, be used as strip- or side-light, as front-lights or as spot-lights.

It may be that these are too expensive, or that



your plays are given in the auditorium of the church where no fixtures on which to hang lamps would be allowed. In that case the simplest arrangement is either a stereopticon operated from the front of the rear gallery or from a special step-ladder back of the audience (neither very satisfactory), or a portable trough for overhead lights and another for footlights. These can be home-made if you have an electrician to do the wiring.

The trough can be made from a thin 5-inch strip

of poplar or other light wood, upon which a three-wire wood moulding can be nailed as a base for the electric bulbs. A strip of tin 14 inches wide may be nailed on one edge of the board and bent, so as to form the back and top of the hood. Partitions can be cut from the poplar, 5 inches on bottom, 8 inches perpendicular to that, the top and back the proper curve. The two ends should be 9 inches high in front. Enough partitions must be used to keep the trough rigid. This trough should be at least two-thirds as long as the width of the stage. The bulbs set $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart from center to center.

Gelatine comes in sheets $19\frac{1}{2}$ by $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches; when cut into four pieces, it can be tacked into frames 10 by 11 inches outside measure. The frames can be made of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch strips of wood, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide, two frames laid one on the other with the gelatine between. The gelatine will last longer if it is laid between crossed wires, or even two sheets of galvanized fly-screening. If a band-saw is not accessible to shape the ends and partitions, a trough can be made of two half-inch boards, 8 or 9 inches wide, the lower nearly an inch wider to project and form a support for the gelatine frames. To these are nailed ends and partitions shaped like a truncated capital A. The cross-bar will be $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to admit a three-wire wood moulding. The broader end may be about 10 inches, inside measure. Partitions may be set $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart, center to center. This trough can be securely suspended by ornamental

chains or wires, from nine to twelve feet above the platform. The inside of the trough should be painted white, the outside green or any dark color to harmonize with the church. A similar trough not quite so long can be laid on the edge of the platform for footlights. Several single bulbs on separate little wooden bases with tin reflectors can be used instead of a trough, but as they must be connected to the same electric cable, the trough is more convenient and safer. These must be connected with a different switch from the auditorium lights, as the latter are turned out during the performance. In addition to these a "baby spot" will be very useful, and a wise investment. For plays presented on church platforms and other temporary stages dimmers are not to be classed as "essentials." A baby spot-light carries its own dimmer, and on a small stage will produce satisfactory effects. By a small stage is meant one not more than twenty feet wide. A baby spot-light, including stand, dimmer, a dozen color slides, 250-watt lamp, and 25 feet of cable, can be bought for about forty dollars. A home-made dimmer can be easily constructed. It will at least add to the interest of the occasion. But it is not automatic. Its smooth working will depend on the person operating it.

It is merely a device to intercept the full flow of the electric current, and to increase or decrease it gradually, without the jerks that make an amateur sunset so amusing to the audience.

The wire leading to the lights is cut, and one end fastened to a triangular sheet of copper, which is slowly lowered, point first, into a crock or glass of water in which sufficient salt has been dissolved to make the rising or lowering of the lights even and smooth.

A glass battery jar or, better still, a glass jar 10 inches high, 10 inches wide, and 4 inches across, is more convenient than a crock. Two posts (1 inch by 3 inches, and about 30 inches high) may be nailed to a heavy wooden base 2 inches thick. A small roller, with a handle makes a windlass. Its projecting pins can rest and turn in two holes bored in the top of the posts.

A sheet of copper 9 inches square is cut diagonally into two triangles. A wire is fastened to the base of one copper triangle, which is raised or lowered into the salt water. The other wire is fastened to the point of the other triangle, which remains submerged in the water.

Winding up the windlass slowly, thus drawing the copper more and more out of the water, gradually reduces the current of electricity that goes to the lights, and they become weaker.

To produce light dawning out of darkness the process is reversed. The operator begins with the windlass already wound up, and all the copper, except the point, out of the water. As he lowers it, the current grows stronger and the lights increase.

Instead of copper, sheets of lead may be used, or large pieces of carbon taken from an old dry battery cell.

Experimenting is the way to success, but one should not expect too much from home-made dimmers. If the operator is skillful and reliable, the result may be satisfactory. But dimmers, much more convenient and reliable, may be bought from stage-lighting firms at a fair price.

All the lights, including the house lights, should be controlled from one switchboard, behind or beside the stage. A temporary or rather a portable switchboard can be used if made by an expert electrician.

Some suggestions:

1. Direct your light upon the players, not upon the scenery.

2. Most amateurs make their night scenes too dark. People on the stage can see each other well enough by the candle or firelight, but the people back in the audience cannot. Turn off some of the light to suggest darkening, but leave the stage light enough to see the players' faces.

3. The dusking and dawning effects of blue and red light are seldom as happy as the players hope. Unless the lighting committee has practiced these long and carefully, it is safer not to attempt them. Even when the committee is satisfied, think again. Such mechanical effects may absorb all the interest

of the spectators and the progress of the play drags lamely. Red light on the face is likely to make it splotchy. While blue gelatine gives a certain amount of blue color, it gives more darkness.

4. All lighting should be rehearsed beforehand. Otherwise the hero, as he enters, trips upon a cable which he had never seen before. This jerks the plug out and extinguishes several lights to the amazement of everybody. Then the hero, unable to recover his footing, is thrown headlong into the lap of the astonished heroine to the great joy of the small boy in the audience, and even the sympathetic friends cannot help laughing.

There is only one way to learn about stage lighting. Experiment, get a baby spot-light or a home-made flood-light, send for a dozen sheets of gelatine, and see what effects the different colors will have upon your scenery, your costumes, and your faces. There is no quick and easy way to learn all about it. How many times you must make-up faces with different grease-paints before you can tell what gelatine to use, or how much rouge to put on, or with what color to shadow the eyelids, etc., etc. Perhaps one can safely sum it up by saying: Do not attempt color effects in a public production until you are sure from your experiments just what the results will be. To begin with, choose plays that do not depend upon color effects for their success. Give these without gelatines, or with straw color to subdue the

white glare. Let no enthusiastic members push you beyond your depths, until you have learned to swim in private.

We have seen from the foregoing that the great object of lighting is to make adequately visible the figures, the actions and especially the faces of the players. But as soon as the director has become familiar with his lighting apparatus, so that he no longer forgets to turn on what he intended, he will cease to be satisfied with a glare of light that makes the players look like flat figures painted on a wall. The next step in his development of skill is to turn off all excess lights, and then arrange movable lights so as to bring out the "roundness" of the figures. They must no longer be flat figures painted on a wall; they must stand out like solid marble carved into the full shape and depth.

We perceive depth by the help of shadows. Not separable shadows like Peter Schliemel's, but the gradual shading from high light to darkness that we all unconsciously note on solid and especially on rounded objects! To produce such lighting—such shading—with electric appliances on the stage requires patient experimenting and considerable artistic skill in the pictorial realm. No printed directions can give one artistic judgment. Neither does good taste in the matter of dress, for instance, give one knowledge in the "values" of light. For the beginner, perhaps the best suggestion is:

1. Give enough light to see the actions and emotions of the players.

2. Place the light so as to bring out the depth, the roundness, the solidity of the figures.

3. Preserve unity in the lighting effects. It is less important that the light should come through the window or through the door or from the table lamp, than that the total be a unified picture. It would be fatal to bring out the roundness, the statuesque qualities of various objects by carefully arranged shadows, if these are cast by light coming from contradictory directions.

4. When using colored light, shadows are just as important and much more difficult to evaluate.

We are all, let us hope, thoroughly convinced that the most important problem in lighting is not to do stunts and produce queer pictures with garish colors, grotesque shadows, sepulchral darkness, or other made-to-order emotional effects. The most important achievement is to throw enough light of *the right color* upon the players to help and not hinder the audience in getting the desired impression from the acting. There must be light enough so that the movements and facial expression of the actors shall not be lost. No matter how proud the committee may be of their scenery, that setting must be only the background for the acting. But it must be a background, an unnoticed but strongly felt support for the acting. It must "belong" to the furnishings, the cos-

tumes, even to the movements of the actors. The portrayal of character is the central aim. This must always be the chief object, and everything else, no matter how interesting and engrossing its accomplishment has been, must be kept strictly subordinate to the portrayal of character.

This does not mean that the director will ignore scenery, furniture and costumes. By no means. If a green silk robe or beautifully painted scenery reflects a sickly pallor upon the heroine's face when she should look radiantly happy, something must be changed. The scene designer, the costumer, the manager of lighting must all work together with the director to secure the best conditions for the expressing of the character's personality through the emotions and actions exhibited in the play.

But after you have attained a reasonable mastery of the principles and practice of lighting, it is well to undertake some more difficult problems in lighting. It is easily possible to overcome difficulties in mechanism, but the chief trouble with amateurs (as with some professionals), will be to keep the mechanism duly subordinate, to keep it from attracting attention to itself.

If the audience is amazed or enthusiastic about the lighting effects, the committee should not feel elated, for they have really failed. When peculiar lighting really illumines the interpretation of the play, you have attained success. The following plays present interesting problems for the lighting com-

mittee. There is a temptation in this connection to describe some beautiful and rather elaborate effects that could be achieved in these plays by the use of suitable lights. But most church groups do not have much lighting apparatus nor the services of a skilled electrician. It is important not to discourage such groups. These plays can be adequately and artistically produced with very simple lighting. If you have a skilled electrician he can work it out without directions. But do not let him put the cart before the horse. The angel is always more important than his halo.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

SCENE I

[*Sunset on MOUNT GILBOA. Sky glows red, right rear. Front of open tent at left. KING SAUL, very tall and stalwart is inside the tent with his son, ABINADAB. His older sons, JONATHAN and MALCHISHUA, right center, all dressed in armored tunics and high laced sandals. Several lesser officers—spearmen in background.*]

MALCHISHUA. Jonathan, I wish father had stayed at home. He's too old to lead this battle.

JONATHAN. Yes—but he is still very strong.

MALCHISHUA. Yes, tremendously strong and active

for a man eighty years old. But it wasn't his strength I meant. . . . It is his spirit. He is discouraged. Everything looks dark to him.

ABNER. He is too sensitive to what people say. They growl and grumble whatever is done for them. They won't fight unless their own village is attacked. They can't see that then it is too late to take up arms, and organize defense.

MALCHISHUA. For forty years father has been trying to get these wooden heads to join together and finish up the Philistines. And they have not sense enough to stand together through a whole campaign.

JONATHAN. They did stick long enough to drive out the hordes of Amalek.

MALCHISHUA. Yes, for three months!

ABNER. You would think that would be a lesson to them.

MALCHISHUA. Yes, you'd think they would learn the importance of banding together, that they will have to stand firm against the Philistines for several years. But no, they go out and kill a few and then run home . . . and kill a few more and then hide. And—oh, heavens—why don't we leave them alone, and let the Philistines gobble them up?

JONATHAN [*smiling kindly*]. Because we are the Princes of Israel. We must fight back these invaders, if we have to fight alone.

ABNER. You won't have to fight alone. But the tribesmen are backward.

JONATHAN [*acknowledges ABNER's loyalty with a friendly nod*]. The settlements are far apart and so they feel strange and suspicious of each other. But they are doing better. All these tribes on the mountains of Judah and Ephraim stick together loyally. That is very different from twenty years ago.

ABNER. Yes, they rally better than at first to the King's trumpet, but . . . there ought to be ten times as many.

MALCHISHUA. And the tribes in Galilee never help us, Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher.

JONATHAN. Well, they are hopelessly separated from us by this great valley of Esdraelon. See how it cuts right across, from the Jordan to the Great Sea.

MALCHISHUA. The Philistines keep their hold on these outposts; why can't we take them and hold them just as well?

ABNER. If we could hold this valley we could command the caravan road from Damascus and Mesopotamia. Look at that string of camels now. That is what makes the Philistine cities rich. The trade from Persia and Babylon pouring through to Egypt.

MALCHISHUA. Well, why can't we hold these strongholds, and send the camel caravans over the pass of Dothan and down through Samaria and Hebron? [*A pause.*]

JONATHAN. The population of this plain is not

friendly to us. They share the blood of the Philistines. A garrison among friendly people is very different from holding a stronghold among enemies. They would constantly spy on us and carry tidings to our enemies. [*Pause.*] But we must conquer this valley and establish our garrisons somehow.

ABNER. We may have to drive these herdsmen out and settle the whole valley with our own tribesmen.

MALCHISHUA. That would take a long time . . . See, yonder comes a messenger.

[KING SAUL, *hearing* MALCHISHUA's *exclamation*, comes out, followed by ABINADAB, as the scout enters breathless from the right.]

KING SAUL. Ha, a messenger! What news?

SCOUT. The tents of the Philistines cover the plain of Jezreel, and the hill of Shunem. [*Sweeping gesture to rear left.*] And three more companies are passing through the pass of Dothan. [*Indicates rear right.*]

KING SAUL. And we are but a handful before them. Behold, we are all dead men.

MALCHISHUA [*down right, to JONATHAN*]. You can't win a battle unless the leader's first impulse is to fight. In his old age his first impulse is to think . . . think . . . think. He has grown too cautious.

ABINADAB. Old men for counsel, but young men for war! Old men grow timid.

JONATHAN. Father is not timid when once he gets into battle.

ABINADAB. Oh, no. But he is too slow about getting in. A good captain strikes first,—without counting all the chances against him.

MALCHISHUA. The King's moodiness and caution have taken all the spirit out of the army. They are nervous, and jumpy. They have lost confidence.

ABINADAB. Jonathan, if you could persuade him to go back to Hebron, and sit in peace under the blossoming olive trees, or in the vineyards by the fountains . . . and leave us to fight the Philistines . . . Could you?

JONATHAN [*shakes head*]. Father will never turn back in the day of battle. He will die fighting.

MALCHISHUA. And we shall die with him.

ABINADAB. But if we could send him home, we might live.

KING SAUL [*who has been gazing moodily aside under his eyebrows, muttering and shaking his head, holding by tent flap pole, now utters his conclusion*]. Only a handful and all dead men, slain by the breath of our God.

JONATHAN. Nay, father, let us fight, and Jehovah our God will deliver us.

KING SAUL. Alas, Jehovah hath forsaken us. I have enquired of him and He doth not answer me; neither by priests nor by prophets.

ABINADAB. Better listen to your captains, father, instead of your priests.

[SAUL *turns to go back to tent.*]

KING SAUL. Oh, that Samuel the prophet were yet alive.

JONATHAN [*going quickly to him*]. But God is alive, and he will fight for us.

KING SAUL [*shaking his head*]. I will go down to the Woman of Endor. She hath dealings with the spirits. Perhaps she can get me a message from the spirit of Samuel.

JONATHAN. Oh, Father, let not the King demean himself by seeking a witch. There is but one thing to do. We must fight.

MALCHISHUA. Let us smite them before the sun goes down.

ABINADAB. Yea, while they are in confusion from the arrival of these new troops.

KING SAUL. Nay, I will go to Endor and ask the woman to consult the spirits.

ABINADAB. You can hardly reach Endor. It is on the farther slope of Shunem, and the Philistines are as thick as hornets around there.

KING SAUL. I'll wait till it is dark, and then I will slip through.

JONATHAN. Well, Father, I will go with thee.

MALCHISHUA. And so will I.

KING SAUL. Nay, Jonathan, my son, thou must remain here, and be the captain of the host. [JONATHAN *bows, and turns back to ABNER. SAUL goes out with MALCHISHUA and ABINADAB. JONATHAN very sad.*]

JONATHAN. What superb courage he used to have. But he has been fighting this battle for forty years. Now he is old . . . and weary . . . very weary, Abner.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[*Inside a house at ENDOR. Night. WOMAN lying on a rug on the floor. A knocking at the door is heard. Enter KING SAUL and MALCHISHUA, disguised with cloaks.*]

KING SAUL. Is this the woman of Endor?

WOMAN [*hesitating*]. What seekest thou in the house of thy handmaid?

KING SAUL. Divine for me, I pray thee, by thy familiar spirit, and bring me a message from the other world.

WOMAN. Why dost thou lay a snare for my life? For King Saul hath cut off out of the land all those that call up the spirits.

KING SAUL. As Jehovah liveth, there shall no punishment come upon thee for this. [*Takes a gold bracelet from his arm and gives it to her.*] Here's gold.

[*The WOMAN gets a bowl of water, sets it on the floor, motions the two men to sit around it. Not too close. Bowl down center. SAUL sits left*

of bowl. WOMAN right of it, behind it MALCHISHUA. WOMAN makes motions with her hands over the bowl, muttering. At last speaks.]

WOMAN. Whom wouldst thou hear from?

KING SAUL. Samuel, the prophet.

WOMAN [*busy with her motions and mutterings*].

I know not whether I can get him for you,
but . . .



[SAUL has started to his feet. The WOMAN startled, looks at him, and turns to follow his gaze to some one behind her. She turns, sees SAMUEL and collapses with a groan.] *

SPIRIT OF SAMUEL. Why has thou disturbed me in the grave?

KING SAUL. O my father, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against us, and press hard upon us, and the children of Israel will not

* The spirit of Samuel may wear the usual Hebrew head-cloth and cord. A tiny green electric bulb may be concealed on his forehead under the edge of this head-cloth, with a wire running to a battery in his pocket. On a darkened stage, this green light will give a ghastly effect on his face.

follow me to battle . . . and God hath forsaken me.

SPIRIT OF SAMUEL. Nay, thou hast forsaken him.

They that trust in Jehovah shall triumph in his salvation.

Thy trust is broken down, thy confidence like snow in the sun.

Thou hast not honored Jehovah before this people.

The heart of the people thou hast melted away.

Therefore tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me

In the habitations of the dead.

CURTAIN

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

SCENE I

[*A field near Bethlehem. SHEPHERDS sitting or reclining around a small fire at midnight. JOHANNES sitting on a rock near the fire.*]

JOHANNES. Was it a wolf? or a jackal?

ZOBAB [*standing*]. I suspect it was a jackal, but Benaiah thinks it was a wolf. It did look a tawny color, but in the pale moonlight you can't tell what color a beast is.

JOHANNES. It might have been a hyena.

ZOBAB. No, it didn't howl, like a hyena, and it didn't run like one. It was either a jackal or a wolf.

JOHANNES. Well, did it kill the sheep?

ZOBAB [*standing*]. No, Benaiah had his club with the iron spikes in it, and he threw it at the brute. It struck him in the shoulder and he dropped the lamb and ran away with a howl.

SHAMMAH [*sitting*]. Well, I have heard jackals howl many a time, but I never had one attack any of my sheep. [*Reclining.*] My, aren't the stars brilliant tonight? Did you ever see so many? As if all the hosts of the angels had diamonds in their hair. Thousands! and thousands of thousands! Like the sands of the sea for number!

AROMI [*lying on elbow*]. And the sky so blue. It seems as if you could fly on, and on, and on, forever, among those stars. You would get lost up there, flying on and on until nobody but God could find you.

SHAMMAH. Flying on and on forever! Where would you get to?

AROMI. You would fly on until you came to the great white throne of Jehovah, God of Hosts.

ADORAM [*sitting, chin on knees*]. Yes, and yet sometimes I have felt as if the whole sky were pressing close around me, and the stars so near that I've reached out my hand to touch them. [*Rising.*] It seems sometimes as if they were trying to speak to me, and I could almost hear . . . as if the whole silence were just tingling with an outburst-

ing excitement. I have felt sometimes as if the angels were reaching down and touching me, and I was reaching up and touching them.

JOHANNES [*to SHAMMAH*]. Hasn't the youngster a head, Shammah! I've been looking at the stars forty years and I never had such notions as that. My head is mostly to look after sheep. If you were my son, Adoram, I'd make you a rabbi.

ADORAM. No, thank you, Johannes. I do not care to spend my time shut up in a synagogue, or to fog my brains poring over old manuscripts. I'd rather tend sheep. I'd rather live out here in the open, where . . . why! . . . what is that?

[They are startled by a bright light at the rear of the stage. The center of it quivers into the form of an ANGEL. Each SHEPHERD, whether standing, sitting or lying, is startled into a half-frightened, half-expectant posture. They look at the ANGEL and listen with eager amazement.]

ANGEL. Be not afraid. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all peoples; for there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour who is anointed Lord.

[The SHEPHERDS have been holding their breath. As the ANGEL finishes his sentence there is a slight movement of relief amongst them.]

ANGEL. And this is the sign unto you. Ye shall find . . . a babe . . .

ZOBAB. A babe!

ANGEL. Yea, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

AROMI. In swaddling clothes? Why . . .

ANGEL. Yea, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

AROMI [*to ADORAM*]. In a manger! Adoram, in a manger? [*ADORAM nods assent.*]

[*Off stage—a burst of angelic music* “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace among men, in whom he is well pleased.”]

SHAMMAH [*as the music ceases and the bright light fades*]. They’re gone! Listen! No, they’re gone!

AROMI. Do you think they mean . . . in Bethlehem? What is the city of David? Do they mean Bethlehem or Jerusalem?

SHAMMAH. I wonder! They say he was born in the house of Jesse, right over yonder. I should think Bethlehem would be the city of David.

ADORAM. But we sing, “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, the city of the great King.” The great King . . . that must be David.

JOHANNES. You might run over to Bethlehem first. That need not delay you long. Then you are on the highway and you can soon step along to Jerusalem. You might as well kill two birds with one stone.

ADORAM. Well, let us go right to Bethlehem and see this. [*SHAMMAH arises and moves toward right, laying hand on ZOBAB’s shoulder.*]

SHAMMAH. Aye, let us go. Come, Zobah.

ZOBAB. It must be something strange and wonderful. [*Moving along after SHAMMAH.*]

AROMI. Yes, for the Lord to make it known to us like this.

ADORAM. Well, let us go quickly. But [*stops suddenly*] I forgot. Who will stay with the flocks?

JOHANNES. I'll take care of them, but don't stay gossiping till morning.

AROMI. But it is too bad for you not to see this wonderful Prince.

JOHANNES. Oh, I'll see him another time, your Prince. [*Sings, or chants.*]

"Give ear, O shepherd of Israel,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." *

If he is the Prince, he'll have plenty to do.

"With righteousness shall he judge the poor,
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the
wicked." †

He'll need to live more than three score years and ten to do all that. Time enough for me to see him, lad.

[The other SHEPHERDS have all left by this time, and JONANNES gathers his robe about him]

* Ps. 80.

† Isa. 11: 4.

and reclines by fire, while singing or chanting ad lib.]

“He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
He will gather the lambs in his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And will gently lead those that have their young.” *

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[*A cave-stable in BETHLEHEM*]

[*MARY is reclining in a rude, makeshift bed. A neighbor woman stands behind her brushing her long, luxuriant hair. JOSEPH is seated on a low stool, holding her hand. The BABY is in a manger near the head of the bed.*]

JOSEPH [*soothingly crooning*].

“My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.
He hath put down princes from their thrones,
And hath exalted them of low degree.”

That is a wonderful song, Mary. I do not see how you ever made it.

MARY [*with quiet but glad serenity*]. The Spirit of

* Isa 7: 14.

the Holy One overshadowed me. [*Continues mus-
ingly.*]

“And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.”

JOSEPH. “Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” *

[*A knock, faint and timid. JOSEPH arises and opens door.*]

ZOBAB. Peace to this house.

JOSEPH [*bowing to ZOBAB, then to group following him*]. God’s peace return to you again . . . and to all the families of Israel. [*The SHEPHERDS enter—rather bashfully.*]

SHAMMAH. We were keeping watch over our flocks this night . . .

AROMI. And an angel of the Lord stood by us . . . [*Turns for confirmation to the other shepherds; they nod assent to him.*] And the glory of the Lord shone round about us, and . . . we were sore afraid . . .

ADORAM. And the angel said unto us: Be not afraid, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy.

SHAMMAH [*eagerly interrupting*]. Which shall be to all the peoples.

ADORAM [*nodding assent*]. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is anointed Lord.

* Isa. 40: 11.

ZOBAH. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. [*WOMAN lifts the BABE from manger and brings it to JOSEPH. He is standing in front of the bed at MARY's feet.*]

JOSEPH [*with the BABE in his arms*]. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* [*He lays the BABE in the bed at MARY's bosom.*]

MARY. Unto thee shall all flesh come.†

[*All look at the BABE with intense interest.*

SHAMMAH and ZOBAH kneel.]

AROMI. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: [*ADORAM joins in, and they both say in concert.*]

Glory to God in the highest

And on earth peace

Among men in whom He is well pleased.‡

ADORAM. Then it came to pass that the angels went away from us into heaven.

AROMI. This is Jehovah's doing:

* Isa. 9: 6.

† Ps. 65: 3.

‡ Luke 2: 14.

It is marvellous in our eyes.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.*

MARY [*slowly, with a full heart*]. I shall remember all these things forever.

CURTAIN

SCENE III

[*Interior of the home in BETHLEHEM.*]

[JOSEPH is planing a plank at right. MARY seated, center, on low stool, sewing (or on floor, grinding). CHILD (two years) playing with shavings to her left.]

JOSEPH [*stops planing a moment*]. Mary, I never saw such beautiful camels. The Hindu was riding on one as white as wool. That old man from Persia had a camel as black as the curtains of Solomon; and the third rode a swift dromedary whose trappings were bells of gold. [*Planes again, then stops.*] That old man had a face of beautiful peace.

MARY. Well, Joseph, I am glad you went to Jerusalem this morning, instead of waiting till evening. You would have missed seeing these wonderful magi. [*Musingly.*] Wonderful and strange! It begins to grow dark, Joseph. Canst thou leave thy work soon for supper?

JOSEPH. Yea, truly . . . but I'm sorry you could

* Ps. 118.

not have seen them too, Mary . . . A woman is tied to her home and misses many a goodly sight.

MARY. Aye, Joseph, but we have a full share of the sweetness of life. [*Picks up CHILD—fondles him, then starts.*] Sh—do you hear the tinkling of bells, . . . what a rich deep tone they have.

JOSEPH. Why! [*Hushed, breathing a whispering tone.*] It sounds like that camel's golden trappings that I heard this morning in Jerusalem . . . I wonder if it be possible . . . [*Knock at the door. JOSEPH looks at MARY with dawning smile, then speaks toward door.*] Enter in peace.

SHEPHERD JOHANNES [*appears in door*]. Joseph ben-Heli, here be great folk come to see Mary and the child. Thou didst never see such camels, man.

JOSEPH. Nor such men, Johannes. Say I would welcome them. [*JOHANNES disappears. JOSEPH lights another lamp and sets it on stand to throw light on MARY. One is hanging already lit.*] Enter, my lords, the abode of thy servant.

CHINESE. We have followed the star of our hopes.

HINDU. The peace of God rest on thy house.

PERSIAN. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

JOSEPH. Behold the Child with Mary, his mother.

[*JOSEPH steps back. HINDU kneels with forehead on hands on floor. CHINESE kneels nearer audience with bowed head and clasped hands. PERSIAN stands on other side of HINDU.*]

PERSIAN [*after looking intently on the CHILD, takes BABE in arms, or looks up with outstretched hands*].

Now let thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
peoples.*

[*While he stands thus, in silent adoration, the HINDU and the CHINESE go to the door, where attendants hand them the gifts, with which they return in same order as before. As soon as they return the PERSIAN comes down to earth again; he goes also and gets his gift. Time it so that by the time the CHINESE has knelt and spread velvet mat on floor and sets gold casket upon it, the HINDU has knelt and is holding his white marble casket out in his hands—the PERSIAN has returned with his golden flask and stands holding it out with both hands, the three gifts being thus in an ascending series when the curtain falls.*]

CHINESE. We bring pure gold, our tribute to the King.

HINDU. And frankincense to consecrate the offering of our hearts.

* Luke 2: 29–32.

PERSIAN. And myrrh for his anointing. The Messiah of God! *

MARY. And nations shall come to thy light.

And Kings to the brightness of thy rising.†

[*Drawing BABE closer.*]

JOSEPH [*musingly*].

And they shall declare thy glory among the nations.‡

And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.§

CURTAIN

SCENE IV

[*Interior of home in BETHLEHEM—night.*]

[*MARY and BABE asleep, left front, JOSEPH up, center. Lamp burns low. A knock at door; repeated; JOSEPH stirs, rolls over without waking. MESSENGER, breathing heavily, enters, blinks, locates JOSEPH, goes and shakes him.*]

MESSENGER [*in a loud whisper, or breathy tone*].

Joseph, Joseph ben-Heli, rouse thee, Joseph!

JOSEPH. Eh,—who is it? What wouldst thou? [*Sit-*

* Messiah in Hebrew means "Anointed One."

† Isa. 60: 3.

‡ Isa. 66: 19.

§ Gen. 12: 3.

ting on edge of raised floor of bed.] Why, lad, is it thou? I thought thou wert at Jerusalem in the palace.

MESSENGER. Haste thee, Joseph, and flee; there is evil determined against the Child. While I was waiting upon King Herod, I overheard the King command a centurion to slay all the babes in Bethlehem before sunset tomorrow.

JOSEPH [*he has put on turban while listening*]. Alas! tomorrow! We must hence tonight. Mary, dear heart [*musingly*], a rude awakening. [JOSEPH stands looking at her, sorry to arouse her, smiling at her beauty.]

MESSENGER. Delay not, Joseph. Hasten!

JOSEPH. Mary, arise. We must depart this night, Mary! Herod would slay the Child. [*To MESSENGER.*] Jehovah bless thee, my lad, and requite thee for this great kindness. The Lord build thy house that it shall not be shaken.

MESSENGER. God's peace go with thee, and with Mary and the Child. Farewell.

[MARY gets up and prepares rapidly, but not in panic or flustered. Puts on head-cloth, gets blanket or cloak, spreads it ready to wrap BABE in.]

MARY. I wonder if there is any corn parched. [*Goes, takes lid off crock.*] Aye, a small measure, good. Joseph, where is thy scrip? [*He gets the leather bag from a nail and brings it. He holds it while she pours parched wheat in.*] Figs we have [*puts*

some in] and raisins. [*Wraps them in cloth and puts in.*]

JOSEPH. Was any bread left from supper?

MARY. A little, enough for him. [*Finds it, and puts into the scrip.* JOSEPH, *during her packing, has gone over his tools, picking and rejecting. Puts into a matting basket, a hammer, chisels, primitive bucksaw, froe, crude plane and drawknife. Whatever tools are used must not be new and modern-looking.*]

JOSEPH. We might flee to Moab, if we were not stopped at Jericho.

MARY. Oh, Joseph, is Moab safe? Could not Herod force them to give us up?

JOSEPH. Well, it would be safer in Egypt, but it is a long way, for thee and the child.

MARY. Aye—Egypt—let us flee to Egypt.

JOSEPH. I will go and seek for a camel or an ass. Johannes hath a big strong ass; if I can find him, he would . . . [*Goes out.*]

MARY [*going from one object to another*]. I will be ready ere you return. Let me see, what can we take? The mill, too heavy . . . we cannot take any jars . . . a flask of honey, aye [*puts in*—the distaff . . . I must spin some wool for a little tunic. [*Puts bundle of wool in and lays distaff near. Gets a blanket and a garment or two, rolls up. Puts own cloak on.*] Come, baby, and get your little coat on. [*Wraps him—and takes him in arms.* JOSEPH *enters.*]

JOSEPH. All ready?—I got an ass from Zobah—
[*Hangs scrip over shoulder, and takes bag and basket.*] Is this all?

MARY. I think it is all we can carry.

JOSEPH [*looking around*]. Better take a lamp.
[*Blows it out and puts in tool basket. Before they reach door, they turn for a last look at their home.*
JOSEPH, reverently and confidently, repeats some lines of a psalm. MARY instantly joins him.]

God is our refuge and strength
A very present help in trouble.
Jehovah of Hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.*

[*They go out. The stage is empty for a few moments. Then SOLDIERS enter, look around, and search.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Nobody here.

CENTURION. They've been here—[*feels mattress*]
and not very long ago; it's still warm.

SECOND SOLDIER. They have not left much. [*Pitchforks, sleeping mat, etc., with spear.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Nothing worth taking. Just a labor-man! See, carpenter's tools.

CENTURION. They've escaped us. Herod's wrath will be fierce.

SECOND SOLDIER. Well, we've killed all the babies in Bethlehem. There's no baby here. He can't blame us.

* Ps. 46: 1, 7.

FIRST SOLDIER. Maybe these folk didn't have any baby. And if they did, what difference could it make? One poor carpenter's baby! He's not going to shake Herod off the throne. [*They laugh rudely.*]

CENTURION. Well, come along. [*They go out.*]

[*An ANGEL enters.*]

ANGEL. Why do the nations rage,
And the Kings of the earth take counsel
Against Jehovah, and against his Anointed?
He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh,
The Lord will have them in derision.
In spite of Kings shall he establish his Kingdom.
He shall preach good tidings to the meek
And bind up the broken-hearted.
He shall build the old wastes
And repair the desolations of many generations.
All the ends of the earth shall come unto him.

CURTAIN

CHAPTER NINE

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP

The first concern in costuming a Bible play is to ascertain what the people in those days and those circumstances really wore. The day has gone by when we can wrap people in sheets or shawls and call them costumes. In every country and in all ages dress has varied according to individual taste and personal resources. Yet in fundamental principles everybody conforms to the dress of the period.

Costuming a Bible play is comparatively easy because customs have changed far less in the Orient than elsewhere. So there is little difference in dress with the lapse of the centuries. In the time of Abraham and Jacob the people were nomads, dwelling in tents on the edge of the desert. They would naturally wear the shepherd or nomad dress. This would still be the commonest dress in the time of Moses, Joshua and the Judges. Not until the time of Solomon did the influential people become citified, and give up their rural customs. From this time onwards there are two classes: the one using finer materials and more skillful tailoring, together with some adoption of the foreign garments brought in from time to

time by the King and his court; the other still using the shepherd dress, with slight modifications if they lived in the so-called cities, and practically unchanged if they lived outside. Even in the time of Christ, this classification would hold. The men of position and culture in Jerusalem would wear longer garments with more elaborate sleeves. Laboring men, instead of the double purpose simlah or cloak of the shepherd, would wear a robe with shorter and narrower sleeves, of cheaper material and reaching a little below the knees. They are less exposed to the deadly desert sun than the shepherd, so they will discard the head-cloth and tire, for some sort of turban. Sandals will in many cases disappear, as many will wear the cast-off slippers of their rich masters, and others will make a heelless slipper that needs no sandal-latchet to tie.

Woman's dress will vary less except in individual adornment, because as society grew more luxurious, their women were kept in greater seclusion, so that the foreign fashions were not flaunted before the public. The common people could occasionally see Kings and nobles in their gorgeous dresses but they seldom saw the wives. Except for the rich imported fabrics of the wealthy, dyeing and weaving were household arts, and therefore underwent little change. The natural colors of goat's hair were black and a dirty white. Those of sheep's wool were sand-color and dark brown. Camel's hair was a light-reddish brown. The commonest dyes were blue, dark

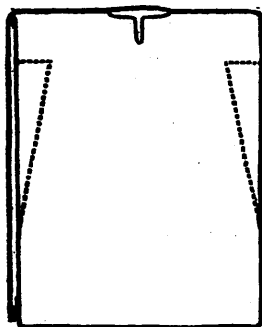
yellow, and madder red. These eight with their combinations made their color scale.

Very helpful pictures in colors have appeared in the "Ladies' Home Journal," the "National Geographic Magazine," and others. The colored pictures of Tissot are well-known, but on account of their fanciful nature and their splotchy drawing, they are not of great value to the costumer. There is a book, however, by William Hole, R.A., containing eighty pictures in color, that is of the greatest practical assistance. It is published by Eyre and Spottiswoode under the title "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth," and is not very expensive.

For other costumes needed, Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman, and for valuable suggestions on the making of costumes in general, the best elementary book is "Costuming a Play" by Elizabeth D. Grimball and Rhea Wells, published by The Century Co.

For the royal and other pretentious costumes, half-silk draperies and remnants of velveteen, tapestry cretonne, gold net, or brocaded sateen can sometimes be cheaply bought. Silks, velvets, and satins may be donated from old attic trunks, also portières, and piano covers. When all other sources fail, canton flannel richly dyed makes a passable velvet; flowered cotton challis, cotton crêpes, ratine, cheese-cloth, and mosquito netting will produce wonders, and almost anything can be done with unbleached muslin and a package of dye.

It is not important that amateurs shall be historically exact in their costumes. (Indeed the most elaborate professional costuming is never exact.) But it is important that they shall know rather accurately what is historically correct, and work towards that. Then after they know what they ought to have in material, color, and cut, they may use curtains, portières, kimonos, bath towels, or the rag-



bag generally, with a liberal allowance of safety pins, and they can get the right effect. But no one can get a desired effect unless he has a distinct picture in mind of what he is trying to make.

There are six garments for men: tunic, coat, cloak, girdle, head-cloth, sandals.

1. The simplest garment is a cotton under-tunic reaching nearly to the knee. This may be white, or white with a thin stripe of red or blue; or yellow with a stripe. If your material is thirty-six inches wide, two and a half yards will make one garment. Fold it lengthwise. Eight inches from the fold cut

in on each side eight inches. Thence cut to the lower corners, or come out to the selvedge a little above the corner. In the middle of the fold cut an eight-inch line for the neck from the middle of this, cut down the front four inches. You can, if you prefer, trim to an oval and face the edge. Do not make this hole for the head too large.

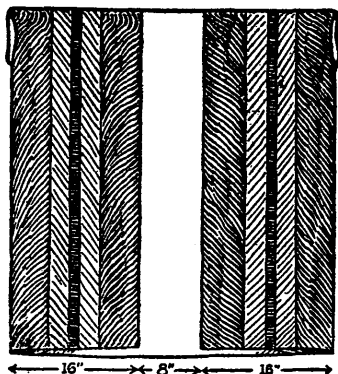
For wealthy or cultured persons this under-tunic may be omitted, and a bit of his own white undergarment will show at the throat. For men at work this tunic bound with a girdle is sufficient, in addition to head-cloth or turban, and perhaps sandals. Used thus it looks better with some color in it. A shepherd often wears a sheepskin coat or vest over it.

2. The coat (kethoneth) is somewhat similar, but has longer sleeves and is slit all the way up the front. When worn, one side laps over the other and is held by the girdle. Some of the coats should be made of rather heavy striped cloth like hickory shirting, or romper cloth. Some might be made of cotton serge or ratine. Stripes less than a half-inch wide are likely to blur into a faded mixture at a distance. The coat should reach to mid-calf or ankle.

If the cloth is 36 inches wide, the coat may be made by folding three yards of cloth, shaping and sewing as for the tunic, and slitting the front up the middle to the neck. These front edges may be faced with a four-inch strip of cloth the same color as the dominant stripe. A piece of the striped cloth should be sewn on each sleeve to lengthen it.

If the cloth is 27 inches wide, three lengths, each about 54 inches, may be sewed together and folded till the selvages meet. Then the shoulders can be sewed up, the arms shaped out and the sides sewn. Here again the sleeves need to be lengthened.

A ten-inch slit may be cut up from the lower hem on each side, to make swift walking easier.



3. The cloak is of two kinds (we'il or simlah.) One, used by the fashionable, is made of rich ornamental cloth after the same general pattern as the coat, but with wider sleeves. A discarded dressing-gown of heavy material could easily be re-shaped a little for this. For very grand persons it might be dyed crimson.

For rural people the cloak (simlah) is both overcoat and sleeping-blanket. It should be of coarser material like close-woven sacking or burlap to represent goat's-hair or camel's-hair cloth. Strips of bur-

lap eight to twelve inches wide may be sewed together, the natural color alternating with others dyed a dark brown. Make thus a spread of cloth six feet wide, and four and a half feet the way the stripes run. Fold over from each side sixteen inches leaving the edges down the front eight inches apart. Sew the shoulder-seams (16 inches each). Cut a hole for the hands from the place where the shoulder seam meets the fold, down seven or eight inches, and bind the edges. For a man of average height a three-inch hem can be turned up at the lower edge. Rough embroidery of red or blue wool or silk may be sewed on the back between the shoulders or down the front.

4. The girdle which binds the coat may be a cord, a leather strap or a sash. For unusual elegance the ends of the sash may hang to the bottom of the coat, and be embroidered in gold and bright silks.

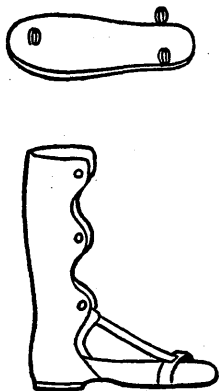
5. The head-dress may be a turban of yellow, red, or blue, or a combination of these. Countrymen will probably wear a head-cloth and tire instead of a turban. A kerchief about a yard square, white or black, or blue, or of bright colors, is folded diagonally, laid on the head with the point behind, and held in place by the "head-tire." This is commonly a double circle of black or brown wool rope, light and soft, which stretches a little, and is pulled down on the head, in the place where a hat-band would be. The tire may be made of twisted black cheese-cloth or muslin, or the thick cord of a dressing-gown will do in an emergency.

6. Shoes and sandals. Neither men nor women wore socks or stockings. Rural women, and men servants, usually went barefoot. Shepherds and travelers wore sandals. Kings and High Priests might wear slippers of blue, red, black or yellow leather. In the time of Christ the city dwellers that considered themselves cultured wore these slippers. Pilate being a soldier and scorning softness would wear sandals. Bright cloth bedroom slippers, or light red leather pointed slippers sold in Oriental stores, answer the purpose. A pair of old bath slippers (without heels) can be dyed, or covered with dark red cloth, or slippers can be made by sewing cloth to slipper soles.

To make a sandal, cut a sole of leather, not too thick. To get the shape put foot on a paper and trace a line around it with a pencil. The ordinary shoe soles are not the right shape for sandals. Attach a loop on each side in front of the heel, that is, exactly below the ankle bone. A loop an inch long, should come up between the great toe and the next. A thong (a heavy shoe lace is cheaper) may run behind the heel, through the side loops, through the toe loop, and tie around the ankle. (See figure) It will probably feel more comfortable if, in addition, a band of soft leather an inch and a half wide is sewed to the sole. It should go over the foot at the root of the great toe.

A military sandal has a bit of leather sewed around the heel, coming up to the ankle or above.

The easiest way to make these is to get a discarded pair of high-topped boots and cut away what you do not want.



Another article of dress should be added for scribes, pharisees and other devout men in the time of Christ, and perhaps going back to Ezra, Nehemiah and Mordecai. It was a white scarf, perhaps 18 inches wide, with several stripes of blue running across near each end. These ends were fringed. The scarf thrown over the shoulders would reach between waist and knee.

WOMEN'S DRESS

1. For ordinary women make a long loose dress of blue or brown, rather close neck and long sleeves, two feet wide at the wrist and running further down

to a point. All dresses should not be exactly alike. For variation:

(a) The front may be slit down from the neck six or eight inches to show white chemise or tunic underneath.

(b) A red bosom, six or seven inches square, may be set on, and some cross-stitch or crow's-foot worked upon it.

(c) A rose-colored Eton jacket or bolero, with sleeves above the elbow, may be worn over the dress.

(d) A stripe woven of red and yellow threads may be run down just in front of each hip, and in other places.

(e) A skirt of blue or brown may be worn, and over it a white tunic reaching below the knees. Over this a long-sleeved waist. The waist is long enough in front to be caught by the girdle; the back extends nearly to the ankles in two tails, one of which may be brought across in front of the body and tucked into the girdle on the other side, thus forming a convenient temporary pocket for small articles.

(f) Sometimes the front extends in narrow tails, which are used as a girdle. There are no buttons, so the waist comes together only at the waist and shows the white chemise or tunic.

(g) A striped red and white, or red and yellow coat. Two yards of 36-inch cloth, folded and cut like tunic, then split down the front from neck to bot-

tom. The sleeves will not come to elbows. Girdle will be worn under this coat.

2. Two yards of white or colored cheese-cloth may be laid on the head, the ends left hanging behind; or one end brought over the shoulder hanging down in front; or one end brought over the shoulder, carried under the chin and thrown back over other shoulder; or both ends may be brought forward, crossed and thrown over opposite shoulders; or in various other ways it may be turned into a cloud of glory with fascinating possibilities. When on a journey the head-veil may be held more secure by winding a bright silk kerchief around it like a man's head-cord. (Isaiah 3:20)

3. Women never wear stockings, and usually go barefoot. Occasionally they wear sandals.

4. Jewelry is important. An anklet on one or both ankles, bracelets on wrists may be worn. But the main item is a frontlet of coins. Sometimes these are strung almost in a solid pile, and lie across the head, the strings being tied to each ear. Sometimes the coins are strung farther apart to a band going across the forehead and tied around the head. In this case the coins lie flat on the forehead. In modern times some women, especially dancers, wear a caul of coins or discs, arranged in a sort of network, that covers the back of the head and falls down on the shoulders. Probably some showy women wore a similar ornament in olden times. (Isaiah 3:18)

Most of these garments are very easy to make. Even a man with a little patience can make them. But very good scenes can be presented without making any of them. It is astonishing what can be done with material at hand, when the group knows what to work toward.

The great secret of amateur costuming is not to make garments like those worn at a certain time, but to pin something upon the player that at a little distance will enable him to look like the person represented. An early Christian, for instance, may be costumed with whatever plunder comes to hand. The tunic a night-rail, the coat a dressing-gown, the girdle a flimsy kimono, the head-dress a scarf wound with the cord from the dressing-gown, the sandals cut from heavy pasteboard, and tied with a strip of cloth.

But as soon as a few people are convinced of the value of Bible plays, a permanent collection of costumes should be started. This is not a difficult undertaking *if* a small room with a secure lock is available in which to keep the garments in good condition. If there is nothing but a closet to toss them into, it is a waste of time and money to make costumes. But with a suitable and secure place and a careful and stern keeper of the wardrobe, a good assortment can gradually be acquired without too great expenditure of time or money.

If the colors of these costumes seem too somber, do not be disappointed. Brightness will be added by

the glint of the lights on the jewels, a bright girdle or a silk head-cloth. It is well to remember that people are usually not very gay in their working clothes.

MAKE-UP

Grease-paints and other "make-up" is used for two different purposes. "Straight make-up" enables a young man or a young woman to act the part of a young man or a young woman, without looking pallid or ghastly under the strong lights used on the stage. The purpose of their make-up is to counteract the glare that bleaches out their natural color, and even melts their features into a pale blur. "Character make-up" is to change the appearance of an actor and assist him to reproduce the personality of the part he is playing. In a Bible play the color of skin may be greatly varied. The Ethiopian is black, the Egyptian reddish olive, the desert shepherd dark gypsy, the Greek olive, the Scythian yellow, the barbarian from Gaul fair-skinned with golden hair. Old men are wrinkled, gray or bald; and their skins lack the freshness of youth. There are many ways of wearing the hair, beard and mustache. It is always well to have a picture before you to copy.

Grease-paints are generally sold by numbers. There are a number of standard brands upon the market. They are usually put up in "sticks," wrapped in paper, or enclosed in pasteboard boxes. Henry C. Miner uses a metal box, which is probably

the most convenient and economical for amateurs, who do not use it up very quickly. Most of the American makers number them as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Pale Flesh | 18. East Indian |
| 2. Light Flesh | 19. Japanese |
| 3. Natural | 20. Mulatto |
| 4. Light Juvenile | 21. White |
| 5. Dark Juvenile | 22. Black |
| 6. Light Sunburn | 23. Light Carmine |
| 7. Dark Sunburn | 24. Dark Carmine |
| 8. Sallow Young Man | 25. Canary Yellow |
| 9. Healthy Middle Age | 26. Golden Yellow |
| 10. Sallow Old Man | 27. Orange Yellow |
| 11. Ruddy Old Man | 28. Yellowish Flesh |
| 12. Light Olive | 29. Purplish Flesh |
| 13. Dark Olive | 30. Hawaiian |
| 14. Gypsy | 31. Yellowish Brown |
| 15. Moor | 32. Dark Hawaiian |
| 16. Chinese | 33. Dark Yellow |
| 17. Indian | 34. West Indian |

The paints from No. 12 to No. 20 will probably be most useful to give the various dark skins of the people that live close to the burnished sun. A little experimenting will show that the same grease-paint gives different results on different persons. Allowance must be made for individual complexion. But on the other hand Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians have

their individual differences also. Uniformity is not necessary, nor desirable.

Blending-powder is also numbered in series, but the numbers do not correspond with the grease-paints.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. White | 9. Chinese |
| 2. Pale Flesh | 10. Indian |
| 3. Natural | 11. Othello |
| 4. Flesh | 12. Gypsy |
| 4½. Dark Rose | 13. Mulatto |
| 5. Juvenile | 14. Japanese |
| 6. Ruddy | 15. West Indian |
| 7. Sunburn | 16. Hawaiian |
| 7½. Dark Sunburn | 17. Champagne |
| 8. Dark Tan | 18. Gray |

There is no mystery about make-up. Any one with deft fingers and artistic instincts can easily learn, if he gives strict attention to the essentials and then tests the results under the stage lighting, standing well back in the auditorium.

The materials needed, beside grease-paint and blending-powder are cold cream (the vanishing cold cream of the toilet will not give good results), a jar of lip rouge, a few lining colors (white, black, gray, brown, ultramarine blue, and yellow), a baby hair-brush to brush off the blending-powder, lamb's-wool powder-puffs, a package of paper stumps, an eye-brow pencil, crêpe hair (black, brown, light gray,

white) and spirit gum to affix the hair to the face. Make-up aprons may be made with a hole for the head like a poncho. Each requires two yards of heavy 36-inch muslin. Thirty inches from the back cut a T-hole for the head, eight inches across, and four inches down (the down stroke of course pointing to the front). Trim this out, and hem the neckband. Cut down six inches further, face the edges and sew on a very large dress hook, or a snap, which the laundry will probably demolish. The front of the apron will thus reach well over the knees; the back need not be so long.

Wiping rags are necessary. Cheese-cloth is commonly used, cut to handkerchief size.

1. The first step in any make-up is to rub cold cream *lightly* but thoroughly all over the face, ears, neck and bosom, going an inch below the opening of the costume. Beginners generally put on too much. Pat off superfluous cream with cloth until the skin is nearly dry. This coating of cold cream is to protect the skin from the grease-paint, and to make it spread more easily and more evenly.

2. Apply the proper grease-paint, in broad strokes on forehead, cheeks, nose, mouth (not lips) and chin. Blend it evenly with fingers and palm. Add more paint as needed. If you have more paint in one place than another, the result will be streaky. It is a safe rule to use the minimum amount of paint that will give the desired color.

3. Put a little touch of lip-rouge on the cheek-

bones and blend the edges thoroughly into the ground tone. Beginners generally use too much rouge. Beware of a red spot when seen from a distance.

Use rouge on the lips, especially in the middle. If you carry it to the extreme edge, the mouth will be enlarged. The darker the complexion the less red on the lips. A touch of red on the septum of the nostrils gives alertness. A point of red at the inner canthus of each eye is thought by some to give brilliancy.

4. Draw a thin black line above the roots of the upper eyelashes. Painting the upper lashes black is better but more trouble. Shade the lower half of the upper lids with blue for blondes, with brown for dark skins.

5. Cover all with the proper blending-powder, using a good-sized powder-puff. Brush off the loose powder with a long-bristle soft baby-brush. After brushing all powder out of the eyebrows, darken and extend them (if necessary) with an eyebrow pencil.

For Chinese, Japanese, or Scythians, whose eyes and eyebrows are oblique, smooth down the eyebrows, or the outer half of them, with a cake of white soap, softened a few moments in water. Let this dry before applying the cold cream. Use plenty of grease-paint over it. Then at the last, paint on a new black eyebrow: a straight line from the corner of the natural eyebrow towards the highest point of the temple.

To remove the make-up, cover the face with a

liberal coating of crisco, or cold cream, then rub off with a wiper. Warm water will do the rest.

6. Beards and mustaches may be bought ready-made, but they seldom look natural. The best way is to build them on the face with crêpe hair. Here again a picture is almost necessary as a working copy. A mustache is always made in two parts. Comb out gently enough hair for one side. (Beginners generally use too much hair.) If there is any cold cream or grease-paint on the upper lip, moisten the corner of a wiper in alcohol and cleanse the necessary area. Apply spirit gum to this area and wait a minute or so until it becomes gummy. Then press the crêpe hair into place and hold there for two minutes. Repeat the procedure with the other half of the mustache.

A chin beard if not too long is most easily made by combing out the end of a rope of crêpe hair, cutting it off with sharp scissors, and making a nest in the cut end into which to put the chin. Apply spirit gum as before, place beard in position and hold it there.

The chaft (there is no good word in English for the mandibular space from the ear to the chin so we may use the Scottish word) may be covered with combings of crêpe hair, or if short or scant beard is wanted, clip off some $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, and when the spirit gum is sufficiently evaporated, scatter or pat it on evenly. Shaggy eyebrows can be put on in the same way. Crêpe hair can be removed by rubbing

cold cream into the roots of it. A careful person may use a beard more than once.

The most helpful manual in English is "The Art of Make-up," by Miss Helena Chalmers, published by Appleton.

When valuable or borrowed costumes are worn, it is wise to fold a strip of cheese-cloth and baste it under the neck-edges of the garment to keep the make-up from soiling it. Grease-paint is difficult to remove from cloth.

The following play will give opportunity for a large variety of costumes.

DELIVERED FROM THE LION'S MOUTH

[*Rome in the Spring*, A. D. 63.]

Characters in order of their appearance:

JUNIA, the housekeeper, a young Roman matron

ARETAS SHEM, an Arabian chief, one of PAUL's
converts, grandson of King Aretas of Da-
mascus

VALENS, JUNIA's husband, a soldier in the Fifth
Legion

PAUL, the Apostle

SOLDIER, bearing the chain

LUKE, the beloved physician, a Greek gentleman

LICTOR, an official of the court of justice

GREGOR, another convert, a barbarian from the North

CLAUDIA, another convert, wife of Pudens, a Roman senator, daughter of Cogidubnus, a King in Southeast Britain

HADASSAH, another convert, a Jewess, niece of Alexander the coppersmith

[The scene is in PAUL's hired house. It belongs to VALENS, a soldier in the Fifth Legion. His wife JUNIA acts as housekeeper for PAUL.]

[When the curtain rises, JUNIA is sweeping the floor around the brazier down left center, and tidying up the small table, center, on which may be seen a book, a rolled parchment and two or three letters. Two narrow low beds are in the right rear corner at right angles. A door right leads to the street; a door down left leads to the rest of the house. Two Roman chairs, stand near the brazier and one near the table. JUNIA stops and listens more than once. Once she goes to the outer door and listens; then cautiously she opens it a few inches and peers out. She shakes her head, closes the door and with a sigh goes back to her work.]

JUNIA. Oh, perhaps he will never come back! And we shall never see him again! *[She puts another lump or two of charcoal on the brazier.]* If the verdict should be "To the lions," oh, God of Heaven! *[She sinks into a chair, sobbing. There is a knock on the outer door. She opens it, and*

ARETAS SHEM enters. He is a tall, handsome, dark-skinned Arab dressed in a dark red tunic, over which he wears an orange robe, trimmed with blue cord. His head-cloth is blue and gold with a little red stripe. In his girdle is a short curved sword. His slippers are of red leather.]

ARETAS SHEM. May the peace of God rest on your roof, fair daughter of Rome.

JUNIA. Welcome, most noble Prince. Is the trial ended?

ARETAS. All but the verdict. The Emperor never gives the judgment till the morrow.

JUNIA. Will it be . . . death for Paulus? Life is so hard and hopeless. And Paulus . . . well, he just seems to give everybody courage. I don't see how I could stand it without him.

ARETAS. Strange that a man in chains and under the constant shadow of the sentence of death should be the one to spread cheerfulness and hope! He's a living proof of eternal life. The omnipotent God helping us day by day! A wonderful thought! And a wonderful experience!

JUNIA. Do you think the verdict will be "thrown to the lions"?

ARETAS. We are hoping not, gentle matron. But no one can tell what Nero will decide. He is seldom governed by justice, though he pretends to be. And sometimes keeping up that pretense of justice helps a little.

JUNIA. The Emperor is terribly severe. He con-

demned his own mother to death. [*Continues as an afterthought, with habitual caution.*] For . . . for interfering with . . . with the government. And they say that his brother, Britannicus, was condemned for the same thing. Only fourteen years old! Poor boy! The sword of justice is very swift.

ARETAS. Yes, the sword is swifter than the justice. Emperors are always bloody, but Nero is the worst of them all. His stepfather, the Emperor Claudius, is poisoned . . . and Nero succeeds him. As soon as Britannicus, Claudius' only son, grows up, he murders the lad lest he become a rival for the throne. Now he is infatuated with this wanton adventuress Poppæa. His mother gives him wise counsel . . . so he murders her. His wife, the noble Octavia, is divorced and dismissed to Pandataria, and soon her head is sent to his vile mistress Poppæa, the new . . . Empress. Justice is fled from Rome. One can scarcely believe in an overruling justice of God. [*A knock at the outer door. They are both startled. JUNIA opens the door timidly. Then much relieved, exclaims.*]

JUNIA. My husband! Enter, Valens, enter. [VALENS enters. He wears the corselet and helmet of a legionary soldier. JUNIA puts her hands on his shoulders and lifts her face for a kiss.] You are home early, Valens. Is the trial finished?

VALENS. Yes. Have they not returned yet from the palace?

JUNIA. Only the Prince Aretas. I hope nothing has happened to the old man. No more Jewish stabbers!

VALENS. No harm. I saw a crowd around him, congratulating him on his good defense, and encouraging him with the hope of release tomorrow. But they will not delay him long. The soldiers will bring him back directly.

ARETAS. Yes, they will be here on the instant. Paul does not walk so fast as your husband, you know.

JUNIA. May the gods preserve his white hair. But even if the Emperor does release him, will he be safe in Rome? You remember what Valens said about some Jews that tried to stab Paulus when the soldiers were conducting him to the palace, the second day of the trial?

VALENS. They won't try that again.

JUNIA. But if he is released, he will no longer have a soldier with him all the time, to guard him from these Jews.

VALENS. No, but he is safe here. All the Jews in Rome would scarcely dare to break into the domicilium of a soldier of the Fifth Legion.

JUNIA. But when he goes out into the streets . . .

VALENS. He must never go. Never go outside without a guard of stalwart friends like Prince Are-

tas, or the chieftain Gregor, or some of the freedmen of Senator Pudens, or those young giants from Ephesus.

ARETAS. Yes. We must guard him on the streets.

But I think there is a great deal more danger from the Emperor than from Jewish assassins.

All the Emperors have been afraid of either Jews or Christians, and Paul is both Jew and Christian.

VALENS. A strange fear for a Roman!

ARETAS. Very strange! But there it is. The Emperor Tiberius sent thousands of Jews from Rome to the mines in Sardinia.

JUNIA. Yes. That was long ago, before we were born.

But I can remember when the Emperor Claudius drove all the Jews out of Rome. It was awful.

They went right past our house for three days. Some of the women with new-born babies. They staggered along scarcely able to carry them. I

was heart-sick, and so angry. Oh, it was cruel, driving folk like that. And then, soon after, the

Emperor was poisoned by his wife and died, they said, writhing in agony. I remember how ferociously glad I felt, and cried, "It serves him

right." [*She covers her face with her hands, and lays it on VALENS' shoulder.*] I was a very impulsive girl.

VALENS [*puts arm around her*]. You were always a little goddess of justice. Even I was sometimes

afraid of you.

JUNIA. How much cruelty there is in the world!

Hark! I hear voices. [*She goes eagerly to the outer door, opens it a little and listens.*] 'Tis he. 'Tis Paulus. I hear his voice. God of Heaven, gratias! [*She opens the outer door, and admits the Apostle Paul, the soldier guarding him and LUKE. The aged APOSTLE is chained by his right wrist to the soldier's left wrist.*] My Lord Paulus, enter thy house in peace.

PAUL [*evidently very weary, but speaking as vigorously as possible, with a kindly smile*]. The peace of God the Father, and his son Jesus Christ our Lord to whom be glory for ever.

JUNIA. Now rest thee, my father, while I fetch thee a flask of Chios, and food to refresh thee after thy long striving. [*Goes out left, preceded by VALENS.*]

PAUL. I am wearied. [*He sits near brazier.*] I no longer have the strength of my youth. [*Smiling.*] I shall soon be such a one as Paul the aged.

LUKE. Nay, I think you are unusually brisk and vigorous, after the severe strain of the trial. It has wearied all of us in spite of our youth.

PAUL. Ah, you suffered in sympathy with me. I thank God for your kindness, which is always comforting my heart.

[*JUNIA brings a small jar of wine and a pewter mug. LUKE pours out some and hands it to PAUL, who drinks it.*]

JUNIA. I will bring a basin of neat's flesh broth on the instant.

LUKE. Aye, my good Junia, but wait till he rests awhile.

[She goes out; LUKE leads PAUL to the rear couch, where he lies down, the soldier chained to him, sitting on the other couch, up right. LUKE goes to the brazier and sits. ARETAS SHEM is seated on the other side of the brazier, both with their backs to PAUL.]

ARETAS *[in a low voice]*. Wherefore did the Emperor leave the seat of judgment?

LUKE. I know not. But one of his physicians, whom I met at the Apothecary's, told me yesterday that the Emperor was expecting the birth of an heir.

ARETAS. An heir! From . . . *[with a glance at the soldier]* . . . Poppæa? . . . *[with a sneer]* . . . the Empress?

LUKE *[nods]*. So I fancied, when I saw him rise, that perhaps a messenger had brought him tidings of it.

ARETAS. From Poppæa. *[Nods.]* Like enough. Now, may the mercy of God keep her mind on her child; for since she became a proselyte of the Jews she is more fiercely rabid against Christians than any of them.

LUKE. Yea, it is fortunate for us that she has been secluded, and not accessible to those seeking judicial favors. *[With a sudden start.]* At least let us hope she has not been accessible to them, or she will render Nero's verdict tomorrow.

ARETAS. If the birth of this heir keeps her in se-

clusion till judgment is given, we may hope for Paul's release. But as soon as she resumes her meddling in public affairs . . . farewell justice and safety.

[A knock on the outer door. JUNIA comes through door left and goes to the outer door. Admits a LICTOR. He stands the fasces against the table, takes a tablet from the bosom of his tunic, reads the order and then hands it to the soldier on guard. VALENS has followed his wife in, and stands in the doorway, left. PAUL sits up on edge of bed.]

LICTOR. I, Nero Claudius Cæsar Drusus Germanicus, Emperor of the inhabited earth, pronounce free and clear Paulus Æmilius, citizen of Tarsus, and of imperial Rome, and command that he be forthwith released. *[To the guard.]* Behold the signet of the Emperor. *[Gives him the tablet; as he turns to go back to the table for the fasces he sees the flask of wine on the table.]* Humph *[with a grin]*, I suppose this was to welcome me. *[Pours out wine and drinks, takes up the fasces and goes out, saying at the door, "Farewell"; the soldier stands reading the tablet.]*

VALENS. Free! By Hercules. Praise to the gods!

ARETAS. Thank God for that.

JUNIA. Oh, sir, you are free. *[She falls on her knees beside him.]* My dear, dear master!

PAUL. For that I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice. As afflictions have abounded to us all, so may grace

much more abound, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. [*All instinctively move as if to gather around PAUL.*]

SOLDIER [*holding them back with a gesture*]. Hold on, friends. Give me a chance to stick in a word, . . . or a key. I'm thinking that's what will please ye best. [*He unlocks the manacle on PAUL's wrist, unlocks the other from his own.*] Now I'll say "Farewell," and may Castor and Pollux give you all the luck you pray for.

PAUL [*rises*]. May Jesus Christ our Lord lift your heart and life into the joy of salvation through believing in him. [*Shakes hands affectionately with soldier, who goes out right. VALENS disappears from the other door. PAUL goes to brazier.*] I thought, Luke, that the Emperor did not render his decision until the day following the trial.

LUKE. Usually he does not. But I surmise that when the messenger came with the tidings, Nero probably told the Judges to settle the matter themselves, without troubling him further. You remember he whispered to one of them before he went out.

[*A knock at door. JUNIA admits a GAUL, tall, fair-haired, dressed in leather tunic and cross-gartered trousers with wide bronze-plated belt from which hangs a long broad sword. A dark brown or black bearskin cloak lined with red hangs from one shoulder.*]

GREGOR. I saw the guard leaving the door with the chain, so I knew our beloved Paul was free.

Though I can scarcely believe it yet! I wanted to be sure of seeing him before he leaves Rome. Is he going tonight? [*Shakes hands with PAUL.*] I am so thankful that you are safe. May God fill your heart to overflowing with blessings.

PAUL. He has filled my heart and life already. Drenched me with the sunlight of his love. I thank him constantly for the great love of my children in the faith. Every day fresh thoughtfulness, new graciousness, the sweet fragrance of your prayers. [*A knock. JUNIA admits CLAUDIA, a beautiful woman dressed as a Roman matron, but with fair skin and auburn hair. She is the daughter of a British King and proud of her birth.*]

CLAUDIA [*to escort outside*]. Now stay there till I am ready to go back. No wandering away in my absence, remember. [*To JUNIA with a glance toward PAUL.*] I am so glad he is here. I hastened as soon as Pudens told me he was freed. [*To PAUL.*] Oh, my father, I am so thankful you are saved.

PAUL [*smiling*]. And I am so thankful that you are saved, my daughter; and that God now worketh his good will in you and through you for the comforting and strengthening of others. [*He waves her to a chair. Both sit and converse a moment.*]

GREGOR. I suppose you will leave Rome at once. I bring you greetings from the North. I beseech you to make a journey to Gaul, and preach the good tidings to my kinsfolk, and our tribe. It were

safer perchance to leave Rome tonight, while you have opportunity.

ARETAS. Aye, you should leave Rome tonight, before Poppæa hears of your release. But most beloved master, come with me to Kadesh. There is no place so safe as the edge of the desert. No Roman soldiers dare venture far into the desert. And we children of the desert can take you from one oasis to another in safety and comfort.

PAUL. Thanks! Thanks always! Your loving care overwhelms me. But no place is so important as Rome. This is the center of the whole world. Always I have sought to establish churches in the great centers; at the meeting of highways, where streams of people mix and mingle. Every pathway leads to Rome. From every village in the empire men come here. [*With deep emotion.*] And if they could carry back the word of the cross, the glad tidings of salvation would spread over the inhabited earth, and in the name of Jesus every knee would bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [*A hushed pause.*]

ARETAS. True, most true! Your preaching all these years in the strategic centers of the empire was the very thought of God. But now you must obey the word of the Lord Jesus: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to another." You cannot preach after Nero beheads you. And we need you, my father, for many years.

GREGOR. Yea, has God not set you free this day, that you may encourage and guide and strengthen the churches?

CLAUDIA. You were sent to bear witness in Rome, my father. You have borne witness. And now there are fields white for the harvest in the extremity of the West.

PAUL [*kindling*]. In the extremity of the West! How the setting sun calls to me! I have long desired to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in all the bounds of the West. [*He pauses, thoughtful.*] And yet Rome is the center of the world.

LUKE. Will your husband be here, Claudia, to give us his counsel?

CLAUDIA. Not presently. He was summoned to the palace. The Empress hath given birth to a daughter.

GREGOR. A daughter!

ARETAS. That will not please the Emperor. Nero wants an heir. There are mutterings of dissatisfaction and revolt throughout the empire. A son in the palace might have quieted them for a while. But . . . [*Shakes his head dubiously.*]

GREGOR. Nothing can quiet it for long. The revolt will come some day. Hatred of Nero is smoldering everywhere.

PAUL. My son, let not your tongue stir the flame.

ARETAS. At least, Gregor, not until Paul is safely out of Rome.

PAUL. Why do you persist in magnifying the danger? If the danger were assured . . . I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, if only I can run my course, and proclaim the good news of the grace of God.

CLAUDIA. My father, we would have thee run thy course . . . without interrupting, clear to the goal. Is not this an open door that the Lord Jesus hath set before thee? that thou mayest run thy course, the full course that he has laid out for thee?

PAUL. It may be, daughter. I do not know. The spirit of the Lord Jesus will surely guide me into the right path. We must wait and listen for his voice.

[A knock at the door. They all start. The knock is repeated. JUNIA admits HADASSAH, a dark-haired Jewess, who enters breathless and excited. She attempts in vain to speak, falls on knees before PAUL. He holds out his hand; she takes it and lays her head on it, but crumples up. LUKE and PAUL lift her, and set her on a chair, center. LUKE gives her a sip of wine. A hum of suppressed conversation while she recovers.]

PAUL. Calm yourself, daughter. We are all in the hands of God.

HADASSAH. Yea, blessed be the God of Israel. But you are in danger, instant danger. My uncle, Abimelech, of the bronze foundry . . .

CLAUDIA. Abimelech! I thought your uncle was Alexander . . .

HADASSAH. Alexander the coppersmith. Yea, his Roman name is Alexander. He came home in great anger. And the rulers of the synagogue came secretly to our house, and [*rises*] they planned a conspiracy . . . and [*comes to PAUL and sinks at his knee*] oh, flee, flee from Rome. [*Her emotions overcome her. CLAUDIA and GREGOR raise her. She throws her arms around CLAUDIA's neck and lays her head upon her shoulder sobbing.*]

PAUL. Alexander the coppersmith has done me much evil. He is very shrewd. Be always on your guard against him.

HADASSAH. My uncle, Abimelech, and Tubal have gone to the palace. [*There are glances of alarm.*] If they gain access to the chamberlain they will bribe him to speak secretly to the Empress as soon as she recovers, that she may send for them as soon as she is able. [*LUKE quietly goes out the street door, speaking a word or two to JUNIA.*] Oh, may the angel Gabriel . . .

CLAUDIA [*caressing HADASSAH*]. There now, little blossom, we will all help the dear Father to escape. [*To PAUL.*] Surely this is an open door of opportunity. My father is a King in Britain, Cogidubnus. He does homage to the Emperor, but nevertheless he will protect my friend. [*Turning to PAUL with emotion.*] And you can preach the

glad tidings to my people . . . to all the tribes of Britain.

PAUL. Ah, that would be the breath of life to me again, to carry the glad tidings to the ends of the earth. To lay foundations where no man had been.

ARETAS. But that is far off, and a sore journey. The desert is the place to rest . . . and to hide. No Roman legions can march through the desert. If they hear of you at Damascus, a camel with a trusty guide will carry you to Scythia or Persia, or Ophir, or Ethiopia, or Egypt. And everywhere you can preach the glad tidings.

GREGOR. Hear me, friends. He needs the sea-swept air of the North to recuperate after the strain and imprisonment. No Roman can ever penetrate the forests of the North. They have conquered only the villages around the fringes of the forest. Come to the Visigoths and Vikings. Preach the glad tidings to our free barbarians. You will be safe there.

PAUL. My children, I rejoice in the Lord greatly at your earnest care for me, and your loving fellowship in spreading the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ . . . whose I am, and whom I serve, day and night. In nothing be anxious. I am safe in his hand from the imperial conqueror. Nay, I am greater than the conqueror through him that loves me. For I am persuaded that neither headsman nor patron, princes nor angels, things present nor things future, things

above nor things below, nor any power in all creation is able to snatch me out of the loving hand of God.

CLAUDIA. But you will leave Rome?

ARETAS. You will come?

GREGOR. You will seek safety?

PAUL. I am always safe . . . in his hand. I count not my life as a possession to be hoarded and guarded, if only I may carry out the stewardship which I received from the Lord Jesus, to distribute the glad tidings of the grace of God.

CLAUDIA [*smiling, shaking her head*]. He is so uncompromising.

HADASSAH. So brave.

PAUL. I desire greatly to go through Asia strengthening the Churches.

ARETAS. And thence to Arabia!

PAUL. But I have already laid the foundations in Asia and in Arabia. You, my beloved son [*puts hand on shoulder of ARETAS*], must build the walls thereon. I am in a strait between two. I would also carry the glad tidings through the West to the bounds of the inhabited world.

CLAUDIA. To Britain!

GREGORY. To the Visigoths!

PAUL. And perhaps to Spain. And thence certainly to Britain and the North. If God gives me time and strength I will preach to all—Greek and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free. And you, my son Gregor, the free chief whom Christ has

made free indeed, you must prepare a lodgment for me in the hearts of your Visigoths and Vikings; and if the Lord will, I shall spend a season with you and them.

CLAUDIA. No one has ever been to my people, and you yourself have been through Asia, and most of your ministrants are there now.

PAUL. True, daughter! [*He stands in deep thought, then turns quickly.*] Let us go to . . . [*Looking around.*] Where is Luke?

JUNIA. He has gone to see what ships are sailing with this tide.

[*A knock. JUNIA admits LUKE.*]

LUKE. A ship of Alexandria leaves at high tide for Spain. A boat is waiting for us at the foot of the street. There is another ship for Ephesus, but not ready for this tide. You can choose. The tide is almost full.

ALL. Oh, go at once lest tomorrow be too late. Take the boat. Sail for Spain. Hasten.

PAUL. Let us sail for Spain.

JUNIA. I will fetch bread for thee and a flask of Chios wine. Go not until I bring it. I will not tarry. [*She goes out door left.*]

PAUL. She thinks ever of my comfort. May the Lord bless her, and comfort her heart with the salvation of her husband. [*He rises and gathers the books and parchments.*]

ARETAS. Where is your leather case? [*He searches.*] Ah, here it is.

[He finds a square of leather, spreads it upon the table. Meanwhile CLAUDIA from a shelf covered with a curtain brings two woolen tunics and a longer coat. She folds them deftly and lays them on the leather square that ARETAS is spreading on the table. GREGOR rather clumsily helps PAUL to put the books on the garments. ARETAS wraps them all in the leather and ties the package with a thong attached to one edge of it.]

GREGOR *[takes off his own bearskin cloak and puts it around PAUL's shoulders, it reaches almost to the ground on PAUL]*. You will need a warm cloak on the sea voyage, and it is soft to sleep in.

PAUL. You are full of goodness, my son. *[He clasps his hand.]* I cannot thank you as you deserve. But my heart thanks you. *[He extends his right hand in informal benediction.]* My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

[JUNIA reënters with a large flask of wine and a package of food wrapped in a napkin or towel. She gives it to LUKE.]

JUNIA. Oh, my Lord Paulus, we shall miss you so much. *[He takes her by the hand.]* I don't want you to go. Oh, yes, I do. You will be safer away, but . . . I shall feel lost without you.

PAUL. I shall keep you in my heart *[in lower tone]*, and in my prayers, daughter. *[He shakes hands with her. She turns sobbing and throws herself on the couch.]*

LUKE. All is ready, sir. We had better go.

PAUL [*goes to CLAUDIA, shaking hands*]. Daughter of the setting sun, the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

CLAUDIA. Oh, you will visit the home of my fathers, if . . . if you escape . . . ?

PAUL [*nods, smiling*]. If the Lord will. My love to Pudens. [*He turns to HADDASSAH.*] Child of my own people! The Lord comfort thee, and strengthen thy heart. Thou hast put thy life in jeopardy to save me . . . for the sake of the Lord Jesus. But if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. [*Lays hand caressingly on her head.* ARETAS starts to door with bundle. LUKE stops him.

LUKE. Nay, better let me carry it. Too many of us might attract attention. Farewell. [*Shakes hands with all. Takes bundle from ARETAS. PAUL clasps ARETAS' hand.*]

PAUL [*smiling*]. Be comforted. [*Near the door he turns, facing them all.*] Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel, and the God of love and peace shall be with you, for ever. [*He goes out following LUKE.*]

CLAUDIA [*motionless in the center of the room with a far-off look*]. For ever! for ever! Eternal life!

SLOW CURTAIN

CHAPTER TEN

SUGGESTIONS TO THE PLAYERS

Inexperienced players are likely to think that their chief task is to learn the words assigned to them. How wooden and parrot-like their phrases sometimes sound!

Then some get the idea that they must be audible. A worthy ambition surely! But the unusual effort often makes their speaking sound forced and their phrasing still more unnatural and wooden.

The third thing of which the beginner is conscious is probably his feeling of awkwardness, of being the center of hostile eyes, of being launched into a great ocean of stage space, helpless to swim ashore. "What shall I do now?" His arms and hands are brooms, his legs not much better. "I ought to be over there; how do I get over there?"

He "succeeds" by memorizing his part word for word, by alternately shouting, or pushing his voice in a cast-iron monotone. He stands rooted to the spot, unless in sheer nervousness he fidgets and shuffles about. He does not realize, and usually his amateur director does not realize, that he must not only understand the full meaning of the lines, but he must have experienced the feelings of the char-

acter that speaks them. He must either have had that actual experience himself, or he must have passed through it vicariously, in sympathetic imagination.

Of course he must know his lines, or he cannot give them to the audience. But this after all is incidental. In the old Italian comedies, the actors made up many of the lines as they went along. Of course he must be clearly and easily audible, or we cannot hear what he says. But what he says is really incidental to what he is doing. His action is the important thing. He is called an *actor*, not a *speaker*. He is not there to tell us what he or somebody else did, but to do it before our eyes. We are present to see the event occur for the first time. The action is thus of the greatest importance. And yet, if we go deep enough, the action itself is really incidental to the feeling, the emotion that expresses itself through action. The ultimate reason for the action is to convey to the audience the feeling that caused the action. Back of all the incidental things, the actor is trying to reveal the feelings in the heart of the personage he represents. These incidental things are very important and take much thought,—the costumes, the scenery, the lighting, the action, the words,—but they are all subordinate to the emotion. They are merely the means through which the feelings are expressed to the audience.

What feelings are stirred in David by the actions of Saul, of Jonathan, of Goliath? And by what actions shall the player express those feelings? He can

reveal emotion by the tones of his voice and by facial expression, gesture, and movement about the stage. But as emotion is much more subtle, and even volatile, than mere statements of facts, it requires a delicacy in the management of tone-qualities, and a flexible control of every nerve and muscle. Most amateur players, because of conventional self-consciousness, are rather stiff and their muscles somewhat tense. Bashfulness, the consciousness of being gazed at by the audience, makes the nerves more jerky and the muscular movements more clumsy.

Flexible and instantly responsive muscles not only require freedom of mind and a sense of enjoyment, but in addition constant correct and versatile use to keep them alert and sensitive.

If a director can induce the right mental conditions, he has conferred a great boon upon the young player. Hence the following suggestions all start with the attitude of mind: Self-forgetfulness is the key to self-possession. Do not think whether you are doing it well, or what people will think of you. Give your whole attention to portraying the character you are creating. Instead of learning the words on the printed page, the player must penetrate through them to the actual scene. He must see *it* in his mind's eye. He must compel his imagination to make every detail vivid, until he sees Moses, David or the Apostle Paul as they lived. More even than this, he must live with them, and share their adventures.

Then he can feel something of the same thrill that they felt in their far-off situation. If the player thus enters into these scenes, he can enable the audience to sense what it all meant to those heroic figures, and to feel the throb of their great living. Unless he can enter into the actual feelings of Moses or David, and thus create him for us upon the stage, he will fail, and we shall see only John Jones sticking his head out from under a lion's flapping skin. He must live for a while Moses' or David's life.

Excellent advice this, and yet—how can we do it? Where shall we begin? Perhaps the most fruitful practical suggestion is to conceive of each scene not as something *said* but as something *done*. The scene is not so many pages of words to say, but a succession of interesting things to do. The player is to translate it all into action. As soon as he learns to do that he will be natural, convincing, interesting, and, more important to himself, comfortable. The words thus become merely an incidental, though important accompaniment to his doings, a running comment on the action, giving a clearer explanation of its meaning.

With this conception not only does the acting become more natural, convincing and comfortable, for both player and audience, but the burden of memorizing is immeasurably lightened.

The scene in this conception is made up of many successive steps towards a certain destination. These may be noted and perhaps jotted down. Having

reached any point in his progress, it is easy, without much strain on the memory, to see where the next launching forth must be, and thus with comparative ease swim on restfully from one island to another without fear of sinking. The words associated with the action will soon become intertwined with it. As soon as the action is familiar by practice, the words also will be absorbed, and the player will find that he knows the lines without having definitely "memorized" them.

A more detailed suggestion about learning the part may be a helpful interruption. Do not sit down and "commit to memory" the words or sentences, not even by reading your part aloud. Learn it rather by giving it. From the very first go through the scene without reading the lines. Begin at once to act out its meaning. You may feel it necessary at first to keep your finger in the book. But even if you have to stop and glance at the book every ten seconds to keep the thought in mind, give it with the book shut. Glance at the book as frequently as you wish so long as you close it and then give the meaning freely with full action. By giving it with full expression of voice and gesture, you will soon find that the words are imbedded in the action, and come to you not by the mental effort of recall, but in subconscious association with this movement of the body, this wave of the hand, that turn of the head or glance of the eyes.

"But how am I to know what movements of body,

hand or head I ought to make?" Aside from a thorough course in gesture, the best answer one can make to this earnest and often painful inquiry is, "Get the situation fully in mind." Compel yourself to conceive the personages distinctly, and call up their surroundings vividly. Has he a stick, a knife, a book? Is he sure of these persons beside him? Are they intelligent and friendly? What is his immediate purpose? Your culminating task is to realize the feelings each would have in this situation, actuated by these motives, conscious of these circumstances. What passed through David's mind when he saw his enemy King Saul come into the cave where he and his men were hiding? Was his first feeling sudden fright or fierce anger? What was his next feeling? What was the effect of feeling a comrade's hot breath on the back of his neck? Of hearing his whisper, "Let me hurl this spear!"?

To realize the situation in such minute detail takes a lot of time, and beginners are in a hurry. If you realize the whole situation, see things from their point of view, and sense vividly their feelings, then the appropriate action will follow almost inevitably even though it be somewhat clumsy.

All this involves knowledge, and knowledge means work. To get knowledge the player must look up all the facts. If he wants the facts about David in the cave, he must read all that is recorded about David and his relations with King Saul. He must make thorough use of the Bible Concordance to look

up every passage, a careful reading of the Bible Dictionary under "David" and "Saul," and reference to some such books as George Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Grant's "Peasantry of Palestine," and Mackie's "Bible Manners and Customs." The explanation of most failures in amateur plays is the fact that many people do not like hard work. Or to put it less harshly, most people do not dig deep enough even though they may be willing to do a lot of puttering about on the surface. The more thorough your knowledge of the situation, the easier and more enjoyable the playing will be.

In line with this general statement a few hints may be helpful if taken as suggestions, rather than hard and fast rules.

1. The art of listening is ranked by some eminent critics as nine-tenths of acting. The good actor converses instead of declaiming memorized speeches. He speaks as if he had never thought of his sentences until this moment. No matter whether he has played it a hundred times, he is living it and feeling it afresh *while he is speaking it*. The audience seem to see his mind at work. They can see how a new idea starts out of what he has just said, or out of what somebody else has just said. They can see his later sentences hatching out of those preceding. This requires intense alertness in the player to catch the idea from the person speaking instead of merely remembering his cue.

The listener must give the same attention, the same aliveness at each moment to what is being said, as if he had never heard it before. He must, as it were, not know what the speaker will say next. Therefore he listens intently and responds with action if not with words to what has just been said, as his disciplined imagination prompts him. And he does not wait till the speaker has completely finished before replying. Interrupt before the last syllable.

The average beginner does not realize that he has anything to do except to utter his sentences in the proper order. All the rest of the time, he is not acting, he is either gazing listlessly around, or fidgeting more and more nervously every moment. If he learns to listen, he will conquer the situation. Hold whatever mood you are in until some cause recognized by the audience induces you to change it. Do not drop out of the character until you are completely off the stage.

2. All tones, gestures and movements must be enlarged. It is natural for you to speak in a mild tone and move your hand five inches while speaking to three friends in a small room. How much louder must you speak to enable a thousand people to hear in a very large room? The three friends can see every motion of your lips and fingers, but the people sitting at the back of the auditorium can scarcely see any movement unless you sweep your hand through a wide circle. For this reason everything on the stage must be enlarged, voice, gesture and movements.

Movement parallel with the footlights is, of course, more noticeable than movement in the line of vision to the rear or to the front. One always responds by action of eyes, mouth, hands or body, *before* responding in words. On the stage this also must be slightly exaggerated.

3. Learn to relax your muscles so as to stand still or sit still without nervous fidgeting. Mere motion blurs the picture. Movement should always be significant. Every movement of the body indicates an inner condition of the mind. Do not let it proclaim your nervousness. Grace is not some mysterious divine endowment. It is the absence of the feeling of awkwardness. Practice beforehand liberating exercises for the free use of your hands and feet, then lose yourself in your part, and your self-forgetfulness will make you graceful. Let yourself become a part of the scene. Do not be afraid to touch persons or furniture, but be independent of them.

4. Whatever you do on the stage should be interesting. This includes entrance and exit. A good dramatist prepares the audience by a few words for the entrance of every personage, no matter how humble. Follow his hint. Unless there is some reason why the audience should focus attention upon your walk across the stage after you have said your say, it is better to break up your last remark into several natural groups, and take a few steps between each, speaking the last bit near the door.

If your part is merely to come upon the empty

stage in silence and poke the fire, do it interestingly. The way you do it may give the key to the whole scene.

Every change in thought or feeling naturally shows itself in change in movement. The speaker swings around because something turned him, and it must be plain to the audience what that something was: a noise, an unexpected remark, a flash of light outside the window, or an irresistible longing within himself for the person he turns towards.

5. While it is true that action is more important than words, yet words are important. You must make yourself distinctly heard. Better practice from the first in a room as large as that in which the play is to be given, and bribe your most candid friend to sit on the back seat and interrupt you with merciless frankness. Of course, shouting or braying, unless you are playing the asinine part of Bully Bottom, will ruin the play. Audibility must be secured by pure tones; and distinctly articulated consonants. Two further suggestions may help. Learn to place the tones in the front of the mouth, and break your sentences into small groups, giving the audience only an "earful" at a time. The beginner's tendency, increased by excitement and incipient stage-fright, is to rattle off the sentences. They have become very familiar to him, but the audience, to whom they are new, will not get more than half of them.

6. The mere matter of sufficient time is very im-

portant. It is obvious that the player must live each thought and feeling long enough for the audience to get it. How much time is needed by the slower minds of the audience, we may perhaps judge by noting the tedious length of time the movies feel forced to give to printed matter. These small groups of words will not seem fragmentary if they are silently filled by imagination with a great deal more that might have been said.

7. Nothing gets the attention and holds it like contrasts. This applies to acting as well as to scenery and costume. A player makes a remark and turns away, perhaps turns his back on the other player, and takes a few steps to the right. The other player replies, whereupon the first stops, snaps around, faces him, perhaps steps towards him, and answers. How much more alive than for both speakers to stand ten feet apart and look in each other's face all the time. Contrast in movement demands close study. Mere movement is fidgeting. Only significant movement must be permitted. What does each change mean? Why does the actor lift his hand and then drop it? Why does he turn away? Why stop? Why listen? Why turn? Why take a step forward?

This cannot be worked out a whole page at once. You must take only a little bit and work at it carefully. It may take an hour to work through a page. Without some expert critic or director it is difficult to make yourself give such minute account of what

is going on in your mind, or to compel the other actors to such intensive imagining. But just such close work is necessary to make the acting live; otherwise it is mechanical. An audience quickly feels the difference though probably very few of them could explain it.

When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and carried away to Babylon the royal family and the Hebrew nobles, Daniel was a lad among the captives. Later this young slave became one of the highest government officials in the empire. The story of his rise, with its strange contrasts, has always been fascinating. To begin with he had neither money, official power nor influential friends. There is no evidence that he had social gifts, or that his face and figure were handsome. How then did he gain such mighty power and influence? The answer may perhaps seem rather old-fashioned: by following his ideals instead of his appetites; by pursuing a high purpose instead of pleasure; by caring more for conscience than for comfort, or even safety.

The application of great principles is usually made in little, apparently unimportant things. According to the record, the first significant choice that Daniel made was about his food. People with plenty of money often eat food for indulgence; Daniel ate for nourishment, and drank for refreshment. The King's dainties were delicious but dangerous. Instead of helping, they were likely to hinder a man

from being always at his best. It is difficult at best to listen constantly to the whisperings of God. It is almost impossible if one soporifically soothes himself with the indulgence of his appetites.

If a man brings his impulses under the control of a high-hungering spirit, his power to observe increases, his understanding broadens, his insight quickens. To such men God can whisper secrets that the rest of us are too sleepy or stupid to hear.

DANIEL'S LOYALTY

SCENE I

[A Halt in the Desert.]

[Sky-drop in rear. Down right a large rock. Some smaller rocks here and there. Down left a pile of bales in dark burlap. Babylonian soldiers seated on rocks and on lowest bales eating. Captives sitting, lying, or standing about chained together, or leashed together with hooks in their noses. The soldiers give the captives occasional bits of food as they eat.]

FIRST SOLDIER. Why are we marching back to Babylon with the job only half done? Never saw such poor soldiering, never heard of it. Give ye my blatant oath I never did. Here we surrounds Jerusalem, starves 'em out, captures the lot of

'em, cuts off half their heads, then 'stead of wipin' out the rest, we turns tail and trots 'ome. Why? Ask my grandmother's aunt. [*Fills his mouth with a chunk of meat.*]

SECOND SOLDIER. Why, ye blatant fool, the General got word that his father is dead, and he has to go back and be made King.

FIRST SOLDIER. Made King! Can't we make him King right here? S'pose he goes 'ome and the doddering old priest of Nebo puts the crown and the blue robe on him, what then? He's got to come right back 'ere to finish the job, ain't he? And all this marching through the choking sand for nothing.

THIRD SOLDIER. Oh, soak your skull in vinegar. Can't you understand? It ain't the crown and the robes. It's the priests. Babylon's full of priests, ain't it? Everything's honey-combed with 'em. Ye can't get anywhere without shoving a gold shekel at 'em.

FIRST SOLDIER. No, we can't. But we ain't Nebuchadnezzar. Of course they would skin us. But the King—

SECOND SOLDIER. The King himself has a square those greedy priests. They're a blood-sucking swarm. Underground treacherous pests. They've got everybody scared stiff. He's got to buy 'em up or—or kill 'em all off.

FIRST SOLDIER. I'd say kill 'em. Wish he'd give me the job.

SECOND SOLDIER. Well, he won't. Not till he's sitting all snug on the throne, anyway. His father dressed up in their togs and called himself a priest, on the great feast day, don't ye remember? I shouldn't wonder if we'd see Nebuchadnezzar parading around with the oily brutes, himself.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, he's a pretty shrewd old boy. And he never sleeps with his mouth open.

SECOND SOLDIER. I'll wager a bronze helmet he gives his share of this spoil to the priests.

FIRST SOLDIER. To tickle them under the chin, eh? [*Laughter.*] Well, I'd tickle their throats with a sword. Hello! [*Looking off right.*] What's all the push?

[Some soldiers and others lunge on with captives. One soldier leads two women by cords fastened to hooks in their noses. DANIEL, about eighteen years old, chained by the wrist to his father, ASAPH. A sick and staggering captive follows, driven on by a soldier beating him. The captive falls.]

FOURTH SOLDIER. Get up, you clumsy brute. [*Captive attempts to rise, gasps, settles back. Soldier beats him over the head with his staff.*]

ASAPH. Hold thy hand. The man is not able to rise. He is sick and wounded. You have stunned him.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Is it any of your business? I'll cut his heart out if I want to.

CAPTAIN [*entering quickly*]. What's all this? Who is blocking the way? [*To DANIEL's father.*] Are

you interfering with my soldiers? Humph! You are not a Prince now, you are a slave, see?

ASAPH. I know what I am. I only told him—

CAPTAIN. What! You dare resist me. I'll teach you.

[He stabs ASAPH, who falls into DANIEL's arms.

DANIEL lowers him to the ground.]

ASAPH. I am killed, Daniel. *[DANIEL partly rises with clenched hand and teeth.]* Nay, nay, my son.

[ASAPH grasps DANIEL's arm.] Be not rash. Wait till God's time. Master yourself and you will be master of men.

FIRST SOLDIER *[handing DANIEL a cup of wine]*.

Here, boy, give him a sup of this. *[DANIEL holds it to his lips.]*

ASAPH. Have—courage and—caution. Perchance God wants you for his champion—the partner of God. Be prepared. Take my ring. *[DANIEL takes it off, puts it on his own hand.]* Wine is a mocker. Dainty food will swallow up the eater. *[Collapses and dies.]*

DANIEL. Alas, my father. *[Hands cup back to soldier.]* I thank you, sir.

[Commotion off right. There are shouts of "Our Great Captain," "The Emperor," "Nebuchadnezzar." Some of the crowd back on; NEBUCHADNEZZAR follows. As the ring around him opens, he sees DANIEL and ASAPH.]

NEBUCHADNEZZAR. What's this? Some captive swooned? *[He looks around but nobody answers.]*

Well? Why do you gape at me like sheep? Can't somebody speak? [*To DANIEL.*] What's the matter, boy?

DANIEL [*rises*]. Your captain killed my father, the Prince—

NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Always violent! They would tear down my empire as fast as I can build it up. [*To two soldiers.*] Here, knock off these shackles, and take the body off and bury it. [*Calling.*] Ashpenaz.

ASHPENAZ. My lord, O King.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Ashpenaz, I wish to educate some of the captives from the best families to be leaders and governors in the empire, perhaps priests and Chaldeans. Let this lad be one. Take him into the palace and give him food from my own table.

ASHPENAZ. It shall be done, O King. [*Bows low as KING goes on.*] Ah, lad, thy fortune is made. Wine and fish and vension, birds of the chase and cakes of fine flour every day. Every day thou shalt eat of the King's dainties. And fill thyself with spiced wine and dream thyself into paradise.

DANIEL. Nay, nay, my lord, thy servant craves not the food of the great King. I would—

ASHPENAZ. Tut, tut, boy. I am the lord chamberlain. I am the manager of the King's palace. He leaves all his business in my hands. You keep close to me. You shall have everything of the best. Your old uncle's the chief chop in the palace. [*Nods*

head pompously.] Let us not forget. These captains and satraps can cock up their chins outside, but inside the palace, I am the whole harness. [*Nods.*] When I speak [*he throws up his hands explosively*] whoof!!

DANIEL. I thank you, my lord, for all your kindness to a captive Prince. May the blessing of God be upon your house. Harken to the request of thy servant, I pray you. I am a Prince of the Hebrew people. All my fathers obeyed the law of Moses, the man of God, not to defile ourselves with unhallowed food, nor to drink strange wine. Let me, I pray thee, keep the law of my fathers.

ASHPENAZ. May all the gods of Babylon smile on you. You tickle my heart strings with the music of your voice. But I am afeared of my lord the King, who hath graciously appointed your food from his own table. If he should see your face thinner than the faces of the other lads he is educating, he would cut off my head. Oh-h-h! That would be terribly inconvenient. Oh, no, no, you really must eat the King's dainties. [*With an elaborate smile.*] It needn't trouble your conscience. Don't ask any questions about what is set before you. You will soon get used to it—in the palace.

DANIEL [*fingering his father's ring*]. Wine is a mocker. Dainty food will swallow up the eater. Perhaps God's champion! I'll find a way. I will not defile myself with the King's dainties. I will

prepare to be God's champion. And some day, I will smite his foes.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[An open court in the palace at BABYLON. A throne, center rear, on a low platform, up two or three steps. Behind it a reredos with columns. Down right and left a high pedestal upon which are golden winged bulls facing each other. Two soldiers are on guard, most of the time in front of one or both of the bulls. When the curtain rises, three old white-bearded Chaldeans, or wise men, are talking in low tones.]

FIRST CHALDEAN. Do you suppose he really dreamed it or is it a trick to trap us?

SECOND CHALDEAN. Oh, he dreamed it doubtless. Ashpenaz sent me word by a secret messenger. Most dreams are strange.

THIRD CHALDEAN. If he were not the King, we could laugh it off, but—

FIRST CHALDEAN. I tell you I don't like it. It means trouble.

SECOND CHALDEAN. Dreams like that always bring disaster.

THIRD CHALDEAN. Yes, whenever things change in that queer fashion, gold turning to silver, and then

to brass and iron— [*Shakes head.*] You can't predict any good out of that. It is either death or defeat. And he'll cut our heads off if we tell him that.

SECOND CHALDEAN. And if we predict victory, and then calamity comes, he'll cut our heads off for causing it.

FIRST CHALDEAN. I wish I didn't belong to the priestly caste. That is all our noble rank gets us.

SECOND CHALDEAN. I wish I had slipped off and joined the army when the King's father did.

THIRD CHALDEAN. He never forgot that he was a priest, but Nebuchadnezzar—he cares no more for a priest than a potter. No gratitude!

FIRST SOLDIER [*down right, whispers to second soldier*]. Gratitude for what? He took things with his sword. What did they do for him?

SECOND SOLDIER. Funny, ain't it?

THIRD CHALDEAN. I summoned these young fellows that the King is training for counselors—

FIRST CHALDEAN. Humph!

THIRD CHALDEAN. —and gave them some hints about diplomacy and oracular replies. I am a little afraid of one of them.

SECOND CHALDEAN. That Daniel. Yes, I've spotted him. I—

THIRD CHALDEAN. His eye is as keen—and uncomfortable as the King's. It drills right through you. I've sent for him, and when he comes, perhaps you had better let me talk with him alone. He is too

outspoken. A man will never get on that way. We must all hang together and— Did you hear old Tumu's joke? He said, "Brethren, judging from the King's temper, if we don't all hang together in our counsel, we are more than likely to hang separately." Ha-ha-ha. Very good, very good. Tumu is quite a wit. Well, we must persuade those young fellows to agree with us always.

FIRST CHALDEAN. That Daniel is altogether too precocious. He has no reverence for our prerogatives. Here he comes. Farewell. [*Goes out right.*]

SECOND CHALDEAN. Come past my den. I'll have a cup of wine spiced for you. [*Exit.*]

DANIEL [*enters left*]. You sent for me, my lord.

THIRD CHALDEAN. Yes, I want to warn you. You are too outspoken for your own good. People like that never get on. The path to promotion is discretion, discretion. [*Sound of trumpet is heard.*] The King! He is coming early. We'd better go. [*Hurriedly goes off right. DANIEL goes out left, as the KING and his train enter right. The KING sits upon the throne.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Old whiskers has the mind of a fox.

KING. Summon the Chaldeans. [*A courtier bows and goes out right.*]

COURTIER. A messenger from Tyre, O King.

KING. Let him wait till I have seen the soothsayers. I want to know what my dream portends, first. The messenger from Tyre can wait. Is there no messenger from Egypt? That is more important

than Tyre. Why don't those soothsayers come?
FIRST COURTIER. They come, O King. Behold, they are at the door. [*Three CHALDEANS enter and bow.*]

KING. I have sent for you to interpret a dream that troubles me.

CHALDEANS. O King, live forever.

KING. It was a strange dream, and my spirit is troubled.

CHALDEANS. O King, live forever. Tell thy servants the dream and we will show thee the interpretation thereof.

KING. The thing is gone from me. There was an image of gold. Then somehow, it was silver. Then it turned to iron. Then everything seemed to whirl and a great rock seemed to be in the place of the image. And it swelled up bigger and bigger until it seemed to be pressing upon me and crowding me off, and I awoke in a great sweat of fear. There is nothing clear. It is all confused. Tell me now what it portends.

THIRD CHALDEAN [*all bow low*]. If the King would tell his servants the dream, we would tell the interpretation.

KING. I tell you, the thing is gone from me. I have sent for you to make it known. Why should I support a pack of soothsayers if you can't help me when I need you?

FIRST CHALDEAN. There is not a man on earth that can show the King's matter.

SECOND CHALDEAN. No King or ruler ever asked such a thing of any Chaldean, or of any magician, or soothsayer.

THIRD CHALDEAN. It is a rare thing that the King requireth. None can reveal it except the gods, who dwell not with flesh.

KING. If you show me what it means, ye shall receive gifts, rewards, great honors. But if not, ye shall be cut in pieces.

CHALDEANS [*fall upon knees and faces*]. None but the gods can do this thing. No Chaldean was ever required— No man can reveal what the King—

KING. Let all the Chaldeans, magi, and soothsayers be destroyed. [CHALDEANS *arise and leave with ARIÖCH, the captain of the royal guards.*]

ASHPENAZ. O King of earth and heaven, let thy servant speak. [KING *nods.*] The captain of the King's guard will destroy the young men whom thou gavest into my hands, forasmuch as they are also numbered among the Chaldeans.

KING. Call some of them here. Peradventure they can tell me something.

ASHPENAZ. They are but young, O King. They have not yet learned the wisdom of the wise. When their beards have grown, they can serve the King.

KING. That Daniel knows more than his years; bring him.

ASHPENAZ. I will bring Daniel. [*Goes out left.*]

ARIÖCH [*enters right with DANIEL*]. O King, thy servant sought out all that are learned to destroy

them, and this Daniel requested to be brought before thee that he might interpret the King's dream.

KING. Art thou able to make known unto me my dream and the interpretation?

DANIEL. This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living. But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. He shall make known unto the King what shall be in the latter days. This mighty image which stood before thee in excellent brightness, with the head of gold, the breast of silver, the thighs of brass, and the legs of iron, was standing upon feet of iron and potter's clay.

KING. Yea, yea, that was it. That is what I dreamed. Go on.

DANIEL. Thou, O King, art King of Kings. Unto thee the God of Heaven hath given power and strength and glory. Thou art the head of gold.

KING. Ah! I am the head . . . of gold.

DANIEL. After thee shall arise other kingdoms, inferior to thee, of brass, and iron, and burnt brick. Thou sawest a stone cut out of the mountain without hands.

KING. Yea, the stone! I remember the terrible stone . . . how it swelled and swelled and squeezed against me . . . oh . . . [*covers his face*]. It was a terrible feeling.

DANIEL. And the stone smote the image, and broke in pieces the iron and clay, the silver and gold.

Then the stone swelled larger and larger until it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Behold God shall set up a kingdom made without hands, which shall consume all kingdoms and never be destroyed. Then the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.

KING. That was my dream. I see it now, all clear. Of a truth, your God is a God of Gods, and Lord of Kings. Behold, I, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Kings, do set Daniel over all the wise men. He shall be chief counselor unto the King, and he shall dwell in the court of the King's palace.

[DANIEL bows; KING rises, steps down and puts gold chain around his neck, and goes out. DANIEL bows still lower, then turns looking at the receding crowd, finally raises his hands and eyes to heaven.]

DANIEL. Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. I thank thee and praise thee O thou God of my fathers, that thou dost give me wisdom and knowledge.

FIRST SOLDIER. Chief counselor! Did ye 'ear that? And old Chatter-whiskers tellin' him he'd never get on! By the tail of the Dragon, now 'e can set old whiskers on the stool in the corner. Gettin' on! So 'elp me, Nebo! Why, I can remember when my lord Daniel was dragged 'ere a captive slave, and now look at 'im. 'E's the 'ead of all them Chal-deans. Every one of 'em 'as to trot after him, and

all the priests has to bow down to him. Won't old Chatter-whiskers champ his teeth now? Humph!

'E gives me the tooth-ache.

SECOND SOLDIER. Well, the old codger might as well save his breath to cool his own soup. 'E won't pull any wool over the counselor's eyes. That Daniel —'e's awake, 'e is. And 'e knows the tricks of them Chaldeans.

FIRST SOLDIER. They're so afeard he'll surround them, and cut them loose from the King and landslide them into the river—whoop! And he will. By the nose of Nebo, he will. He's the chief counselor already, before he's old enough to grow a beard.

CURTAIN

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REHEARSALS

A good play cannot be produced without a competent director. He may not have had much experience, but he must be a hard worker, a clear thinker, artistic, and not easily flustered. He must dominate, preferably not with a club. He will need patience, independence, a soothing voice and a sense of humor.

The director's task is to understand and enjoy the play thoroughly himself, and then to help each of the players to understand it as a whole, and appreciate just what his own part should contribute to the total impression. With inexperienced players he must also help each to translate his part by voice and action, and transfer it to the audience with a feeling of delight. No one can successfully create a work of art unless he enjoys doing it. We are not likely to enjoy doing anything until we can do it well. Here manifestly is a demand for unlimited educational skill. The director must never forget that he is dealing, not with professional actors, who have presumably mastered their art, but with a group of rather irresponsible if not frolicking young people.

Too often he is dealing with people that have

scarcely considered whether there is any art in producing a play. He may find only a vague pleasant pink impulse towards self-expression and a naïve delight in dressing up. He is fortunate if he finds a general willingness to do hard work. Whatever he finds, he must plant an ideal in the general mind which is seen to be possible of attainment. To transmute this ideal into an actuality is his first task. In this initial exhibit, he may have to do far too much of the work himself. If he waits until he can teach this one and that one to accomplish it, the enthusiasm of the group will probably cool down, and the members drop off. He must therefore get things done somehow, and in the hurried factitious process, give as much instruction as possible to those that seem most susceptible. Having thus thrown a sop to Cerberus, he can dwell longer on careful preparation next time, and insist (not too positively) upon the members doing more themselves. But originality is not a common flower. We must not be discouraged overmuch, if we find it all too seldom. Patience is still a director's virtue. "Line upon line, and precept upon precept" is still a necessary method in education.

Directors vary greatly in their methods. But there are several things that all seek by some means to attain.

1. The most important is to set the players at their ease and thus help each to be at his best. Encourage them. During the early rehearsals listen to

their interpretation, ask why they do this and that, and develop the necessary improvements out of something of their own rather than thrust upon them an entirely different interpretation ready-made. This method of building upon their foundation may seem too slow, but it will accomplish far more in the end.

2. Another prime object is to stimulate team work. The players must all act together. No one must seek individual glory. Each must help the other to bring out his part, his contribution to the play. Half a dozen actors wandering aimlessly about the stage are not a play. There must be unity in the pictures they make to the eye, and to the ear there must be an on-going flow of significant sound that accords with the unhindered progress of the plot. At any given moment there should be only one focus of attention on the stage. The efforts of all the players must converge upon that point, and no actor must do anything to distract attention from it. The director must see that no player drops out of character while others are speaking and he has "nothing to say." Probably the director's most difficult task with beginners is to teach them to keep in the situation, to continue to act when they are not talking. Perhaps this has been sufficiently emphasized in the chapter on Acting.

As the ultimate aim of acting is to produce emotion in the audience, it is essential that there be harmony if not unity of feeling among the players. The student of psychology might here find the rea-

son that an amateur company occasionally makes a more profound impression than professional actors, who have more temptation perhaps to seek individual prominence.

3. It is the director's duty, at whatever risk of unpopularity, to achieve efficiency and economy of effort in preparing the play. He must begin rehearsals promptly and keep the players hard at work. He must manage to persuade them that they can learn as much while watching others act, especially if they consider carefully the director's criticism and instruction, as while on the stage themselves. And yet he must preserve a balance between observing and practicing. It is not wise to drill two or three players repeatedly in a difficult situation, while all the rest sit around impatiently wasting their time. As soon as everybody has a clear idea of the play as a whole, intensive rehearsals of certain scenes may be announced, and none summoned except the players concerned. But rehearsals can never be planned so that every one is the center of the director's attention all the time. Instead of beginning at the beginning of the play and going straight through, the director, by careful planning beforehand, can rehearse the situation with A, B, C, and D, for twenty or thirty minutes, then rehearse another situation in which X, Y, and Z have parts. Unless he succeeds in holding their attention he cannot maintain a working interest. Without an enthusiastic working interest he will fail.

This attention does not mean a rigid silence and a sense of slavery. There ought to be a feeling of enjoyment that makes it recreation. But a rehearsal is not primarily a social function. The play will go to pieces if couples go off in corners, or groups are so interested in conversation that they do not give heed to what is being done on the stage.

Players that absent themselves from rehearsals or persistently come late should be quietly dropped, no matter how prominent they may seem. No one must be allowed to think the play cannot go on without him. The director must be resourceful and courageous enough to find somebody else to play that part. He may need to rehearse the substitute privately, but he should preserve discipline even if he has to change the play. He is responsible for efficiency in the preparation of the play. Somehow he must achieve it. If the players do not feel, on the whole, that there has been value received for the time spent, a unit of reward for a unit of effort, the group will soon melt away. This problem of holding the group together, and winning their interest, is the initial difficulty that often defeats inexperienced directors. A gracious personality will help greatly, and the players' sense of duty to the church or Sunday-school will hold a few, but every enterprise ought to be sufficiently attractive in itself to hold its supporters. The one essential quality in a director is the ability to direct, to create beautiful plays, to secure artistic results; and neither personal charm nor

official authority can permanently make up for its lack.

Perhaps the most golden hint to the director is to do everything possible before the group meets for rehearsal. The play has been chosen; the three members of the casting committee have been selected (or better still elected) and given copies of the play. After they have read it the director meets with them to discuss available players. They go over the list of possibilities and decided that A, B, and C should try out for Moses, J, K, and M for Miriam, X, Y, and Z for Pharaoh, but there is no one quite suitable for the Egyptian Princess. Manifestly their search must be to discover some unsuspected talent for this part. After the director has studied the play it is well to read it to the entire producing group and discuss the age, appearance and peculiarities of the characters. The whole company thus gets a good idea of the play, and the trying out becomes much more than effective. Of course any member may try out for any part he desires, but it will save time to begin with those nominated by the committee.

It is quite possible to start rehearsals before the whole cast is selected. Indeed it is much easier to try out candidates when several of the players already selected know their lines and action well enough to carry the play along. No hard-and-fast line need be drawn between try-outs and rehearsals. Do not be in a hurry to decide upon the cast. Better to go on with the try-outs until the player's action makes

you reasonably sure. If the costume committee has decided upon X, Y, and M, let those persons play the parts again and again while you go over the scene repeatedly, trying different people for the other parts. Give these chosen players occasional hints for improvement. Thus you can conduct a rehearsal and a try-out at the same time. After the cast is selected they may roughly block out the action by acting the play as well as they can with book in hand, getting a general idea of the entrances, groupings, and relative positions from thus walking through their parts. As soon as the main groupings are decided, note them in the director's book, and in the prompter's copy. A convenient way is to make a map or floor plan in the margin. Where the grouping is not obvious, it is well to make a rough map on every page.

Some directors emphasize grouping so much that they think of the play as a series of pictures, and the progress of the action as the dissolving of one picture or group, and the gradual building up of the next. Certainly much training and patience are necessary before players learn to melt out of a certain grouping naturally and apparently unconsciously, and then reassemble in a different and equally natural grouping.

The director has already in private sketched on a sheet of paper the plan of the stage with its tables, chairs and doors; and has in imagination walked through the play, using buttons for the players, or

tiny cards with the names of the characters. On almost every page of his own copy of the play he has penciled their relative positions. He need never mention them if the players work out for themselves satisfactory groupings. But to have a map showing every change will give him a confidence and a command of the situation he could not otherwise have.

As soon as the cast is selected, a prompter should be chosen. The director should never do the prompting himself. His eyes should be on the players, not on the book. During rehearsals the prompter should be down in front beside the director, so as to confer with him and record all decisions in the prompter's copy. The prompter should be a responsible person with a clear voice, good judgment and decision of character, willing to do this difficult, tedious, but very important work. His name should go upon the program as assistant director. There is no better way to learn the first lessons in directing. At rehearsals the prompter should not wait for the floundering player to fish around for his lost words, but at the slightest hesitation supply them in a loud clear tone, so as to keep the scene moving without a break. Promptness and not secrecy is his aim at rehearsals. The prompter should never allow the next player to wait for his cue. If the one speaking forgets or boggles, start the next player. Beginners need considerable pushing to keep up the pace. It is sometimes well to select secretly the most alert players for pace-

makers, "feed" the lines to them and urge the rest to keep up.

In spite of all these efforts beginners are likely to drag in the last act of a long play from sheer weariness. They have not the endurance of seasoned professionals nor their resources for sustaining the interest of the audience. Usually the first act has been rehearsed many times more than the last, so when the players are tired, the last act naturally weakens instead of being the climax. For this reason some directors, after the cast is familiar with the play, practice the last act first, and always rehearse it before going on with the others. Amateur entertainments generally impress people as too long. An experienced director will prune the play severely. When the play takes the place of a regular religious service it would seem wise to attempt only a one-act play, or a one-hour play. Smooth movement accumulating emotional momentum, necessitates prompt entrances. The players should usually be half way to the center of the stage by the time the beginner opens the door. Dragging must be avoided, not by rushing over the lines but by picking up the cues quickly.

It is desirable, indeed almost essential, to rehearse on a floor as large as the stage to be used in the public presentation. Walls, doors, windows, etc., can be indicated, full size, on the floor with chalk. Chairs, benches, even boxes can be used for thrones and chesterfields.

The director will go slow enough in the early rehearsals to make sure that all the players understand the situation, the characters, and the movement of the play. It is wise to repeat and repeat until they get and give the right interpretation. Many minor matters must be left to be improved in later rehearsals, but do not go on leaving players with the wrong idea of a situation, or it may become ineradicable.

In later rehearsals the director will interrupt less and less. It is better then to stop a few minutes at the end of a scene and call attention to the suggestions you have jotted down. The tempo, the sense of movement, the increase of interest and the gathering emotion all require an uninterrupted playing of an entire scene.

It is a decided help to have a few costumes worn in the rehearsals as early as possible. Some of the costume committee, who cannot fashion a garment from a vague printed description in a book of travel, or even from a colored picture, will undertake it when they see one worn, and can examine it in their own hands. An early dress rehearsal will always uncover latent costuming talent, besides setting the whole group to searching the community for spears, sashes, jewelry, etc., etc., which up to this time they had not realized were needed.

To rehearse in costume helps the players also. They not only get into the atmosphere of the play better, but they become accustomed to the strange

garments and are less awkwardly conscious of them. No great emotion can ever flow to the audience over the barriers of self-consciousness.

For this reason, if there were no other, it is important that every player know his part perfectly at the earliest moment. Stratton * smiles ruefully at those players, found in almost every group, who "ignorantly believe they are ready for the audience as soon as they can romp through the lines without prompting." They are then just ready to begin serious and artistic rehearsing.

From the very first, use all the articles in rehearsal that are to be used in the play. If the sword or spear is not yet made, use a stick. If the royal robe is not ready, wear the piano cover. Every rehearsal in which the players do not handle the properties tends to fix wrong action, which must later be changed, with confusing results. When every action should have become subconscious by repeated practice, the players are awkwardly and uncomfortably conscious of these new and strange articles.

Do not let a player keep his eyes glued upon the person to whom he is speaking. Let him practice speaking with his face front (without looking at the audience of course). An occasional glance to the person he is speaking to is sufficient, and much more natural.

The director should avoid as far as possible showing a player the mechanics of gesture or voice. In-

* "Producing in Little Theaters." Henry Holt and Company.

stead of telling him to do this or speak thus, induce him to paraphrase the situation, to express the thought and feeling of the character in his own words, adding remarks that the author might have made. At first it may be necessary for the director himself to paraphrase the situation for the inexperienced players, until their minds get into it and then their imaginations kindle. In old-fashioned pumps we had to pour down a little water to get them started and then they produced a copious supply.

Give the players time to imagine themselves in the situation, to think and feel their way into the character, to adjust themselves to the particular response that the occasion would naturally arouse. Wrong acting usually comes from inadequate imagining, and that sometimes from nervously hurrying on. Give them time, make them take time to feel their way into it. This is the first thing to work for when the players assemble for rehearsal. Before their imagination has created the scene or situation as a structural unity, induce each player to conceive vividly the characteristics of the person to be presented, and express that character as fully as possible. For this never mind the entrances and exits, never mind the groupings and stage balance. Some directors even have a social hour, a sort of masquerade, in which the players dress and act *in character*, not at all following the plot of the play. The purpose of this is to help each of them to sense his part.

After the players have thus gained some notion of the characters they are depicting, help everybody to conceive the play as action (something to be done), with incidental remarks explanatory of the action. Help them to go through the action from the very first before they have learned the words. Let them piece out with their own words, and go through the situation as if the words were a minor matter, as indeed they are. Never allow a rehearsal to become a test of word learning. The important question is not, "Have the actors memorized their lines?" but, "Can they give us the thoughts, feelings, and decisions of the personages by intelligent and interesting action?" Can we see the thing taking place before our eyes? Can we see the facts in the case? Can we see the thoughts arising in the mind of each personage? Can we see their emotions upwelling and outflowing in slight but unmistakable actions? If the director insists severely, with himself and his players, upon this as a constant requirement, the work of the group will take on a distinction of quality that will give it irresistible charm.

After saying emphatically that the action is of first importance and the speaking quite subordinate, it might be wise to add that audible speech is not to be neglected. If one speaks at all, it should be well done. The director may help a young player amazingly by teaching him to group his words. Slow him down. Stop his mad onrush, and induce him to issue his remarks, "an earful at a time," that is, in groups

small enough to be easily taken in, and assimilated by the audience without undue strain of attention.

It will add much to the clearness of impression if each speaker makes a noticeable movement just before he speaks. That is, let him express his thought or feeling first in action, then, very closely following it, in speech. In this way our attention is called to the person about to speak by the preparatory movement, and our attention being thus focused upon him we do not lose anything he says. Otherwise we might glance from one motionless object to another trying to discover from whence the sounds come, and before we have identified the speaker his speech is done.

Prof. A. M. Drummond of Cornell suggests two very good tests for the director to use in the later rehearsals, in measuring the effectiveness of the performance. Let him turn his back to the stage and note how much he gets by ear alone. To meet this test the players must speak distinctly in clear tones, with good melodies. Then let him go to the back of the auditorium and close his ears to ascertain how much he gets by eye alone. This of course will test their action, and show whether they are completely in the mood, and how freely and fully they express themselves in significant bearing and unconscious gesture.

Perhaps a suggestion about the producing committees would be acceptable. As the group grows into

permanence, the director will gradually evolve certain committees.

1. The business committee is headed by the treasurer. This will look after any publicity, printing, ticket sellers, ushers and transportation of properties.

2. The stage committee is headed by the stage manager. It includes any others necessary to help with the curtain, the lighting, the shifting of furniture or scenery. In ordinary groups this committee makes the scenery, takes off the oak door and substitutes a glass one, paints a flat to suggest a bit of garden seen through the open window, and does a score of artistic, ingenious, impossible things that are needed in every production.

3. The costume committee gathers all sorts of materials from willing donors, makes costumes from the director's designs, issues them to the players, collects, cleans, repairs, and stores them. They should gradually gather a collection of pictures, showing in detail and in color every conceivable garment, ornament, weapon, or furniture that may sometime be needed.

4. The committee on stage properties must make, buy, beg or borrow all sorts of articles needed in the play. In the latter case they must be personally responsible to return the article to the trustful owner. They should soon acquire sufficient skill to make whatever is needed and never borrow.

5. A make-up committee is very useful. With a few lessons and some practice they can do very satisfactory work. Even if the director is an expert he cannot make-up the whole cast between supper and the performance.

6. The most important committee is the directing committee. This includes the prompter, and the try-out committee, who decide upon the cast, and after that do everything the director dares leave to them, or can train them to do. The director of course is a member of every committee. He should meet with each and assist in the discussion, but he should pray for the will and the grace to say nothing, until it is certain that the work is sure to suffer for lack of a suggestion. The director that preserves a golden silence will frequently find to his astonishment that in the course of the discussion one of the committee will suggest the very thing that he has seen all along is indispensable to success. The amount of wisdom that a lavish Providence has given to babes is sometimes startling.

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